



# THE SPIRITS OF HENASKU

## and Other Stories







## **The route to your roots**

**Founder Editor: Anant Pai**

When they look back at their formative years, many Indians nostalgically recall the vital part Amar Chitra Katha comics have played in their lives. It was **Amar Chitra Katha** that first gave them a glimpse of their glorious heritage.

Since they were introduced in 1967, there are now over **450 Amar Chitra Katha** titles to choose from. **Over 100 million copies** have been sold worldwide.

Now, Amar Chitra Katha titles are even more widely available in **1000 + bookstores all across India**. If you do not have access to a bookstore near you, you can also buy all the titles through our online store, **[www.amarchitrakatha.com](http://www.amarchitrakatha.com)**. We provide quick delivery anywhere in the world. To make it easy for you to locate the titles of your choice from our treasure trove of titles, the books are now arranged in six categories.

### **Epics and Mythology**

Best known stories from the Epics and the Puranas

### **Indian Classics**

Enchanting tales from Indian literature

### **Fables and Humour**

Evergreen folktales, legends and tales of wisdom and humour

### **Bravehearts**

Stirring tales of brave men and women of India

### **Visionaries**

Inspiring tales of thinkers, social reformers and nation builders

### **Contemporary Classics**

The best of modern Indian literature

## **AMAR CHITRA KATHA PVT LTD**

© Amar Chitra Katha Pvt. Ltd., August 2021,

Published by Amar Chitra Katha Pvt Ltd, 204, 2nd Floor, Dhantak Plaza, Makwana Rd, Gamdevi, Marol, Andheri East, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400059

Facebook: The Amar Chitra Katha Studio | Instagram: @amarchitrakatha | Twitter: @ACKComics

All rights reserved. This book is sold subject to the condition that the publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system (including but not limited to computers, disks, external drives, electronic or digital devices, e-readers, websites), or transmitted in any form or by any means (including but not limited to cyclostyling, photocopying, docutech or other reprographic reproductions, mechanical, recording, electronic, digital versions) without the prior written permission of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.





# CONTENTS

1	<b>THE SPIRITS OF HENASKU</b> Script: Krithika Nair Art: Arijit Dutta Chowdhury Colour: Sanjhiya Mayekar	2
2	<b>THE EXTRAORDINARY BOY</b> Script: Vijita Mukherjee Art: Vineet Nair Colour: Sachin Adhare	12
3	<b>DEVCHAR AND THE MOTHER-IN-LAW</b> Script: Vaishnavi Nagaraj Art: Savio Mascarenhas Colour: Akshay Khadilkar	18
4	<b>THE MOUSE'S SHARE</b> Script: Komal Narwani Art: Archana Amberkar Colour: Sachin Adhare	23
5	<b>CLEVER NARAYANI</b> Script: Mrinalini Manda Art: Vineet Nair Colour: Sachin Adhare	30

*The stories 'The Spirits of Henasku' and 'The Extraordinary Boy' have been contributed by Little Local, Roots Ladakh and the people of Henasku, Ladakh.*

**Special Pages Art:** Vineet Nair

**Special Pages Colour:** Sachin Adhare

**Layout:** Pranay Bendre, Prasad Sawant, Mala Narwani

**Editorial Team:** Krithika Nair and Komal Narwani

**Deputy Art Director:** Ritoparna Hazra

**Art Director:** Savio Mascarenhas

**Associate Editor:** Sanjana Kapur

**Executive Editor:** Reena Ittyerah Puri



A LONG TIME AGO IN A VILLAGE IN LADAKH,  
THERE LIVED A TRADER NAMED JINPA.

# THE SPIRITS OF HENASKU

## A FOLKTALE FROM LADAKH



THE NEXT DAY —



\*YOUNGER BROTHER IN LADAKHI

<sup>^</sup>A GREETING



JINPA WALKED A LONG WAY AND REACHED THE TOWN MARKET.

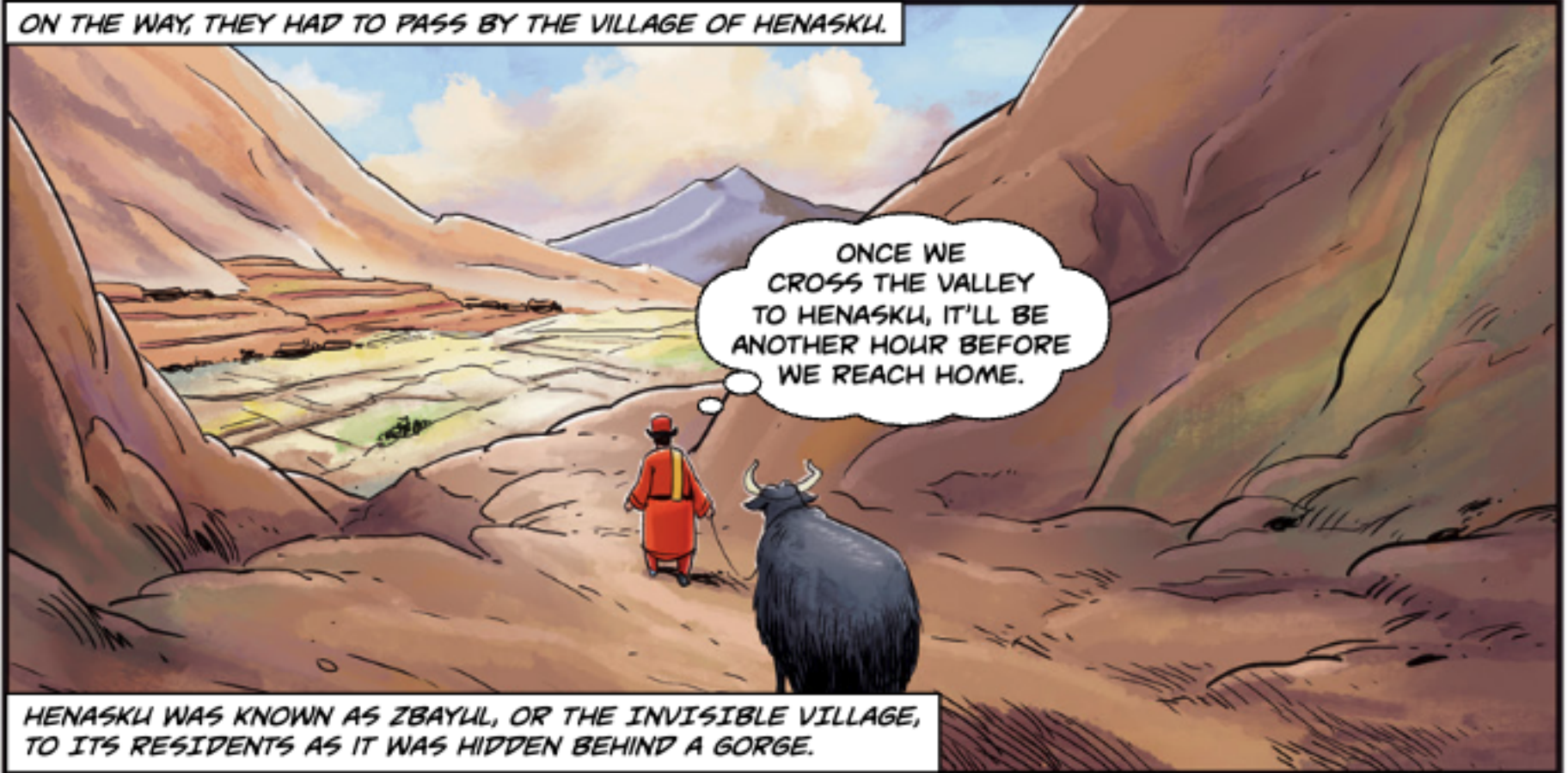


HAPPY WITH THE PURCHASE, JINPA AND HIS NEW BULL SET OUT ON THEIR JOURNEY BACK HOME.





ON THE WAY, THEY HAD TO PASS BY THE VILLAGE OF HENASKU.



HENASKU WAS KNOWN AS ZBAYUL, OR THE INVISIBLE VILLAGE, TO ITS RESIDENTS AS IT WAS HIDDEN BEHIND A GORGE.

HOWEVER, WHEN HE REACHED CLOSE TO HENASKU —



JINPA TRIED MANY TRICKS TO GET HIS BULL TO MOVE FORWARD.





JINPA'S ANTICS ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF THE VILLAGERS.

WHY IS HIS BULL NOT MOVING, KALSANG ACHO\*?

I THINK THE ZBALU ARE STOPPING THE BULL FROM ENTERING OUR VILLAGE.

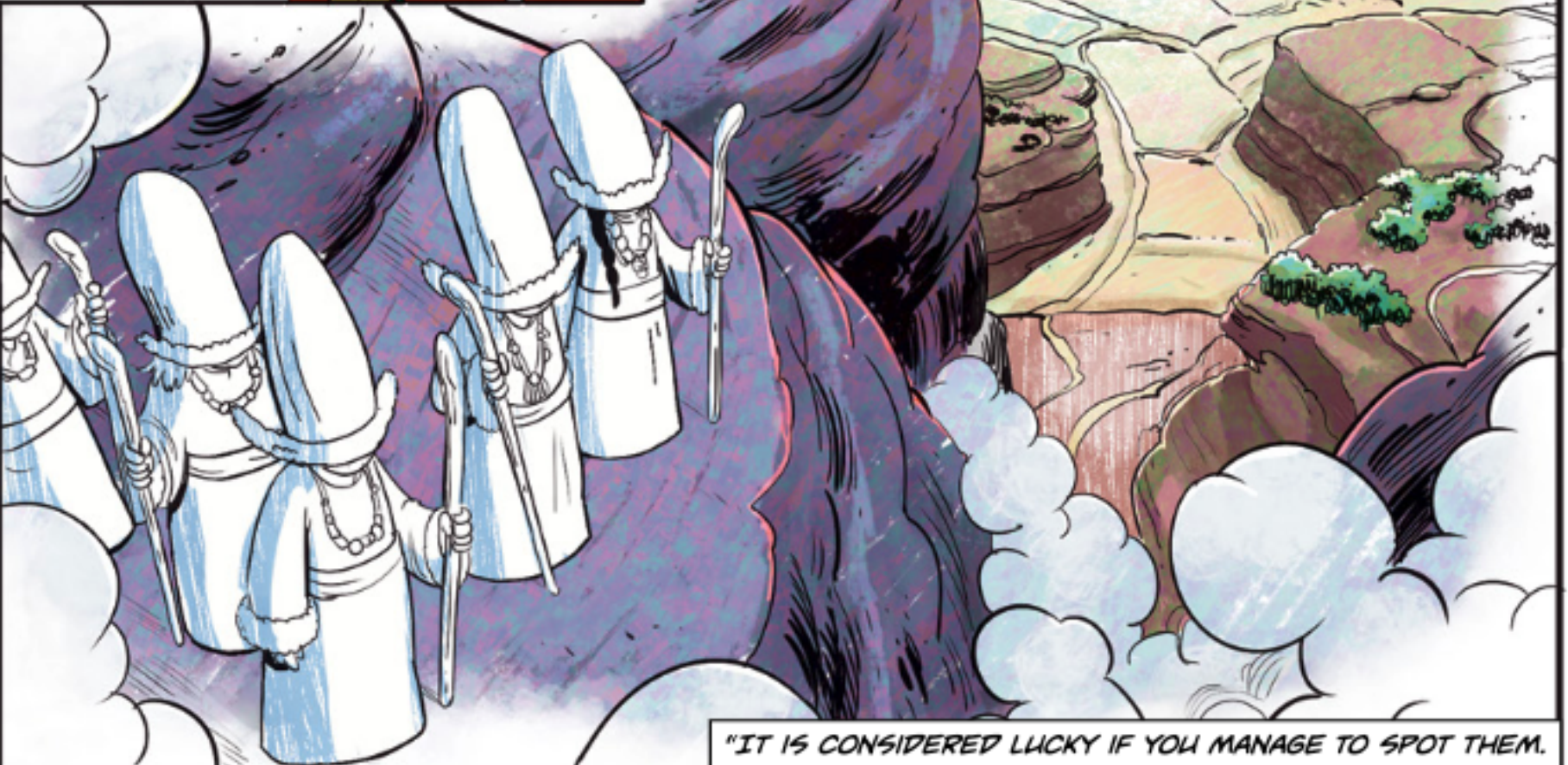
THE ZBALU? WHAT IS THAT?



WE BELIEVE THAT HENASKU AND ITS PEOPLE ARE PROTECTED BY THE ZBALU, OR THE INVISIBLE PEOPLE.

THEY MAKE THEIR PRESENCE FELT OFTEN AND SHOW UP WHENEVER THE VILLAGE NEEDS TO BE GUIDED OR PROTECTED.

"THE ZBALU LIVE ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN CALLED ZDONGRI, OPPOSITE THE VILLAGE. THEY ARE DWARFS IN WHITE ATTIRE, WEARING A HAT AND CARRYING A STICK.



"IT IS CONSIDERED LUCKY IF YOU MANAGE TO SPOT THEM.

\*ELDER BROTHER



"IF YOU MANAGE TO GET HOLD OF THEIR HAT AND THEIR STICK, YOU CAN MAKE A WISH FOR ANYTHING YOUR HEART DESIRES!"



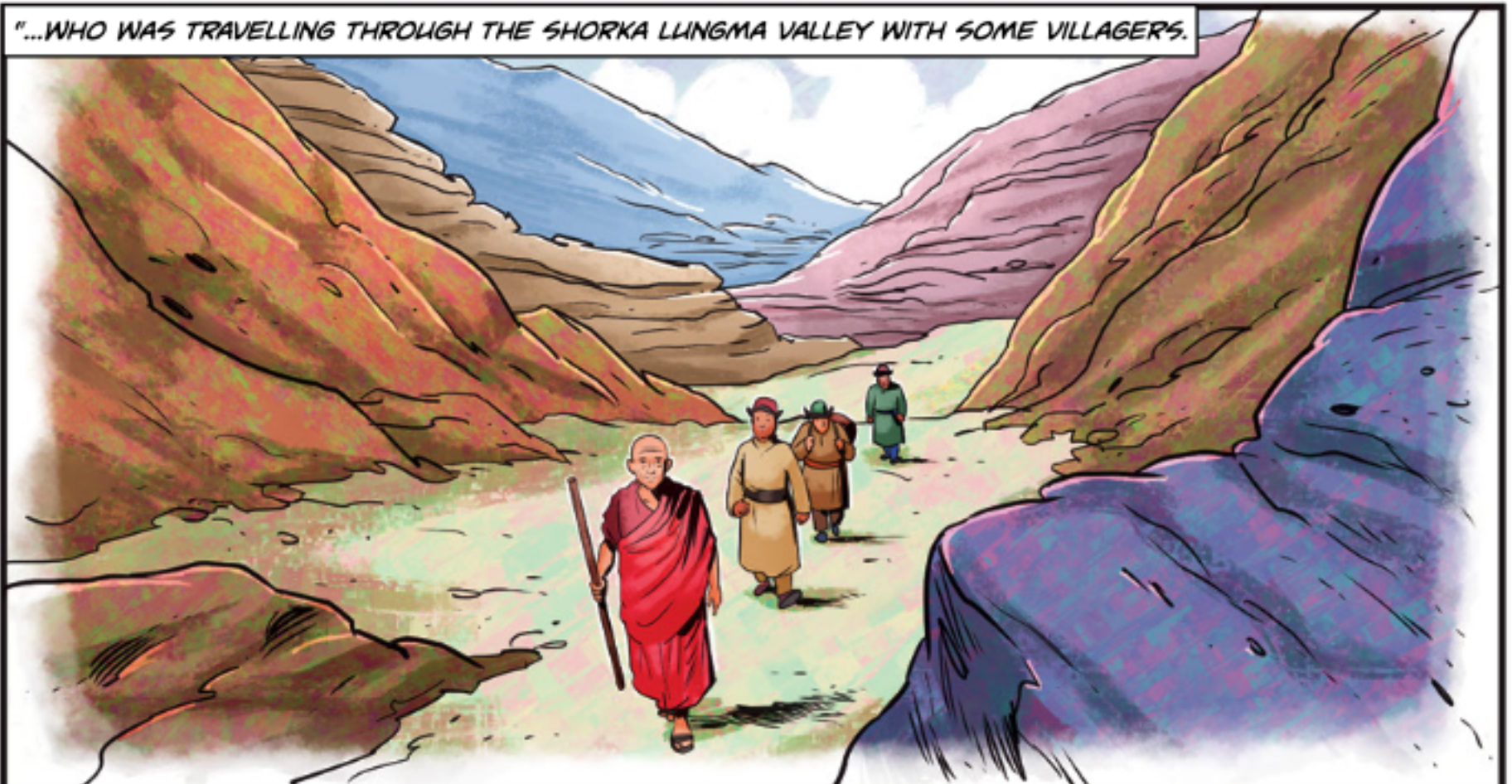
"HOWEVER, BE CAREFUL. IF THE ZBALLU MANAGE TO GET BACK THEIR HAT OR STICK, THEN THEY CAN CURSE YOU TILL THE END OF TIME."



MY GRANDMA SAYS, IF YOU'RE GOOD, THE ZBALLU SOMETIMES VISIT YOU WITH GIFTS. SHE TOLD ME A STORY ABOUT A RINPOCHE\*...

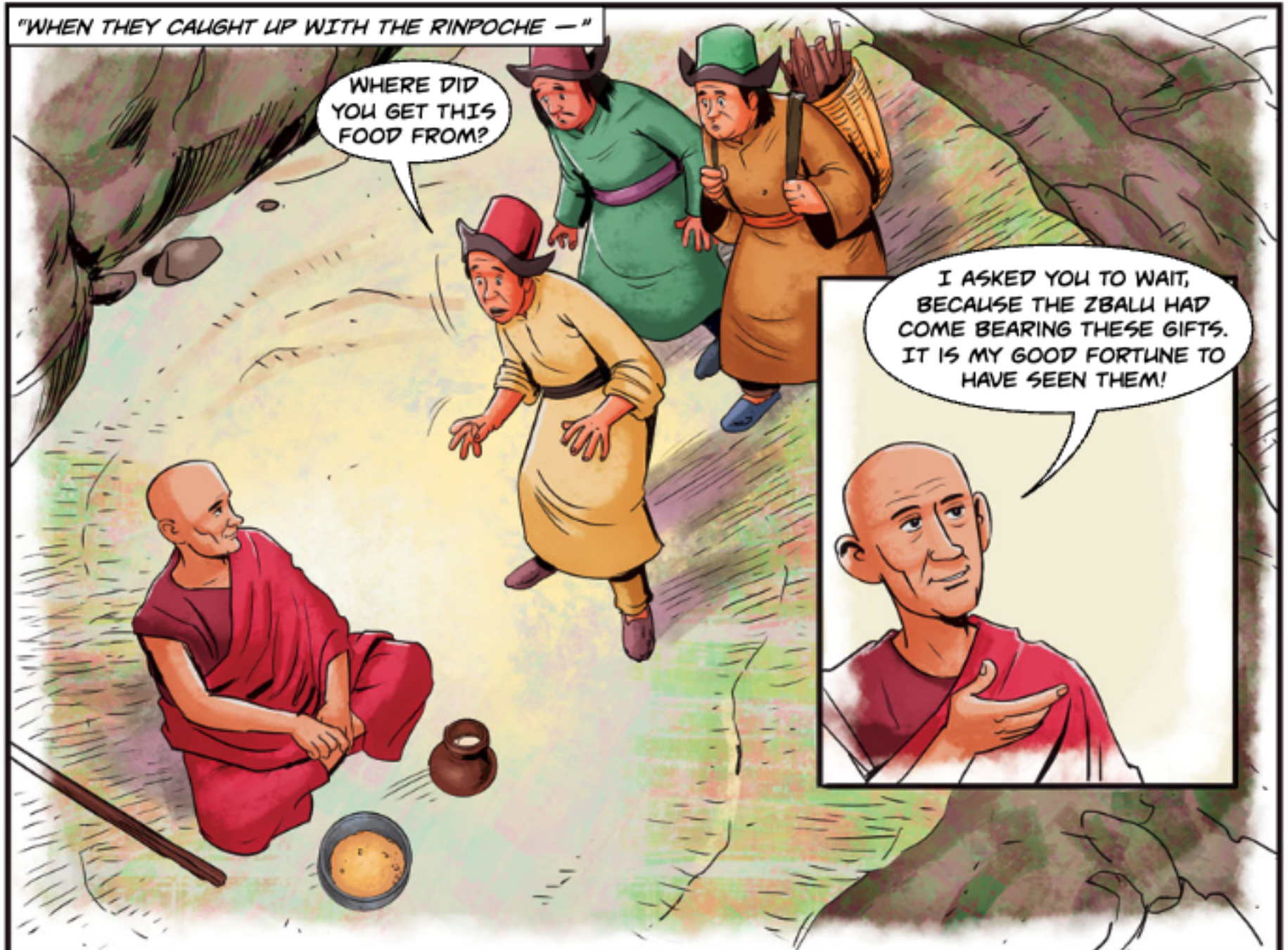


"...WHO WAS TRAVELLING THROUGH THE SHORKA LUNGMA VALLEY WITH SOME VILLAGERS."



\*A TIBETAN BUDDHIST SPIRITUAL LEADER, THE NAME IS AN HONORIFIC TERM THAT MEANS 'PRECIOUS ONE'.







THE STORIES DELIGHTED JINPA BUT ALSO CONFUSED HIM.



THE VILLAGERS ASKED AROUND TO SEE IF ANYBODY KNEW ANYTHING.



AT LAST —



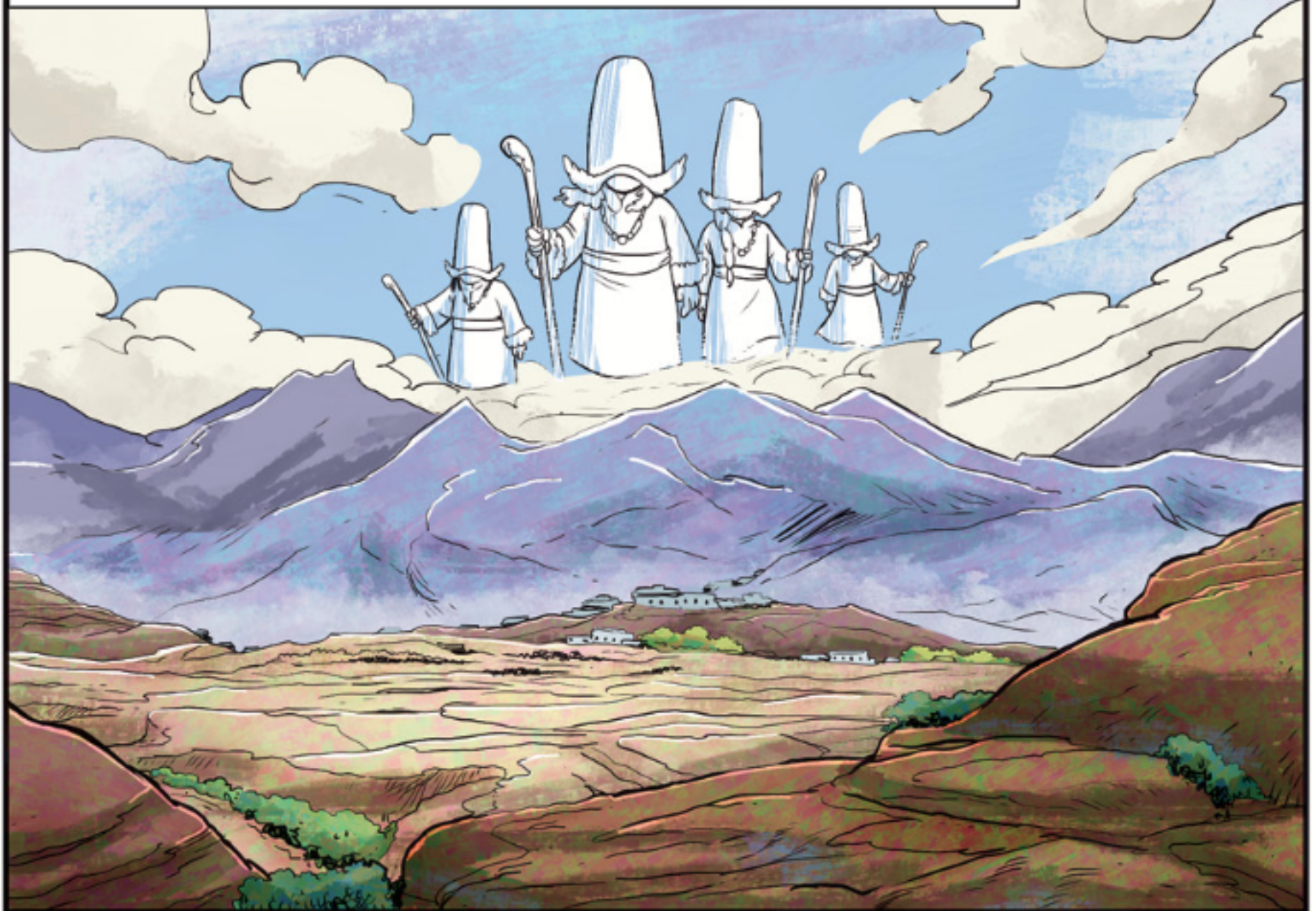


THE VILLAGERS WENT BACK TO INFORM JINPA OF THEIR DISCOVERY.



JINPA RESPECTED THE ZBALLU'S WISHES AND TOOK THE BULL BACK TO ITS OWNER.

TODAY, THE 500-YEAR-OLD 'INVISIBLE' VILLAGE OF HENASKU LIES IN THE UNION TERRITORY OF LADAKH, GUARDED BY THE MAGIC OF THE PROTECTIVE ZBALLU SPIRITS.





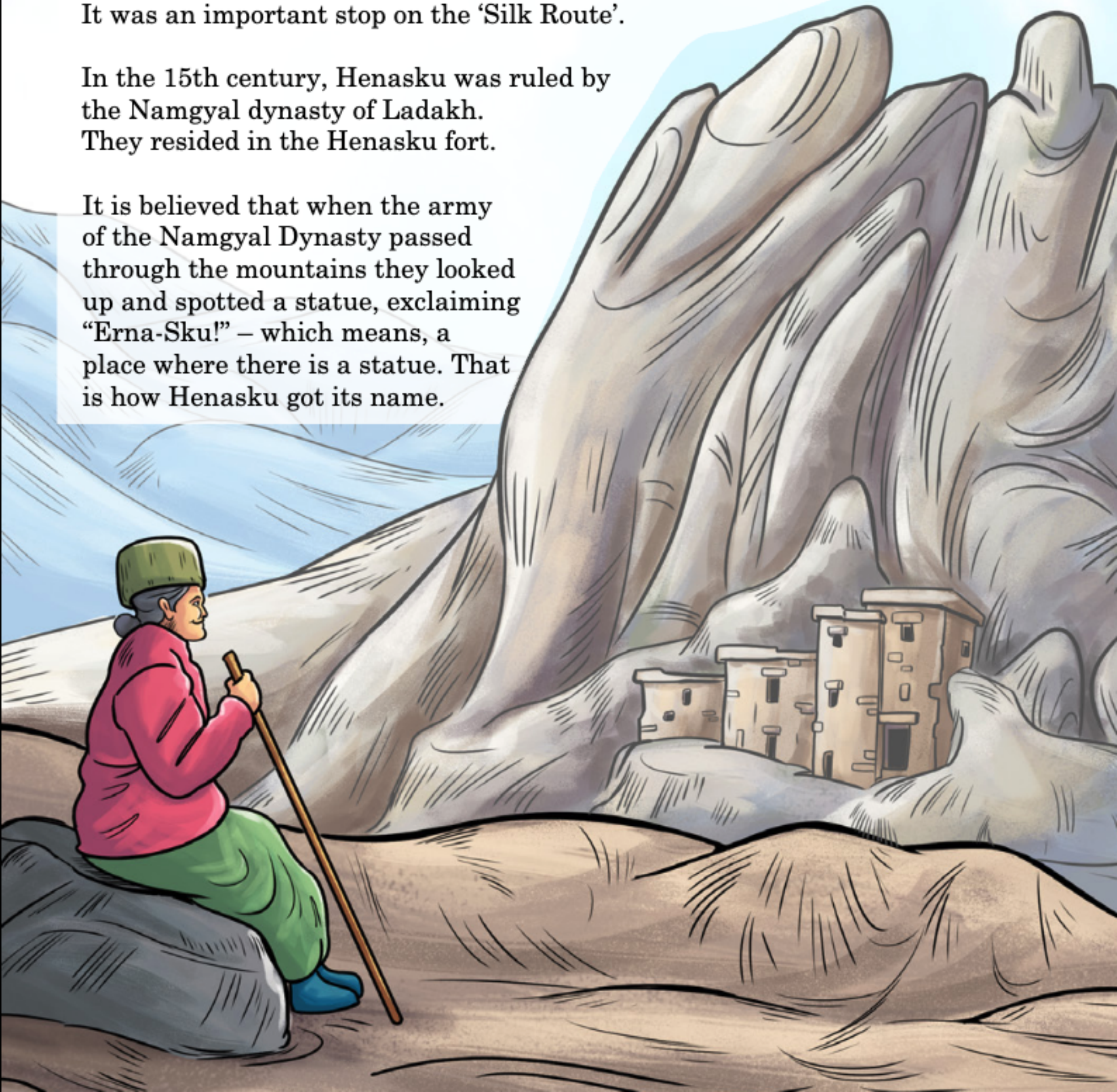
# THE HIDDEN VILLAGE OF HENASKU

Henasku is a beautiful, 500-year-old, village in the union territory of Ladakh. It remains hidden behind a gorge and that is why in the olden days it was called 'Zbayul', which in the local language means 'the invisible village'.

Many traders from the regions of Leh, Kargil, Balochistan, Gilgit and Central Asia stopped by Henasku for their trade. It was an important stop on the 'Silk Route'.

In the 15th century, Henasku was ruled by the Namgyal dynasty of Ladakh. They resided in the Henasku fort.

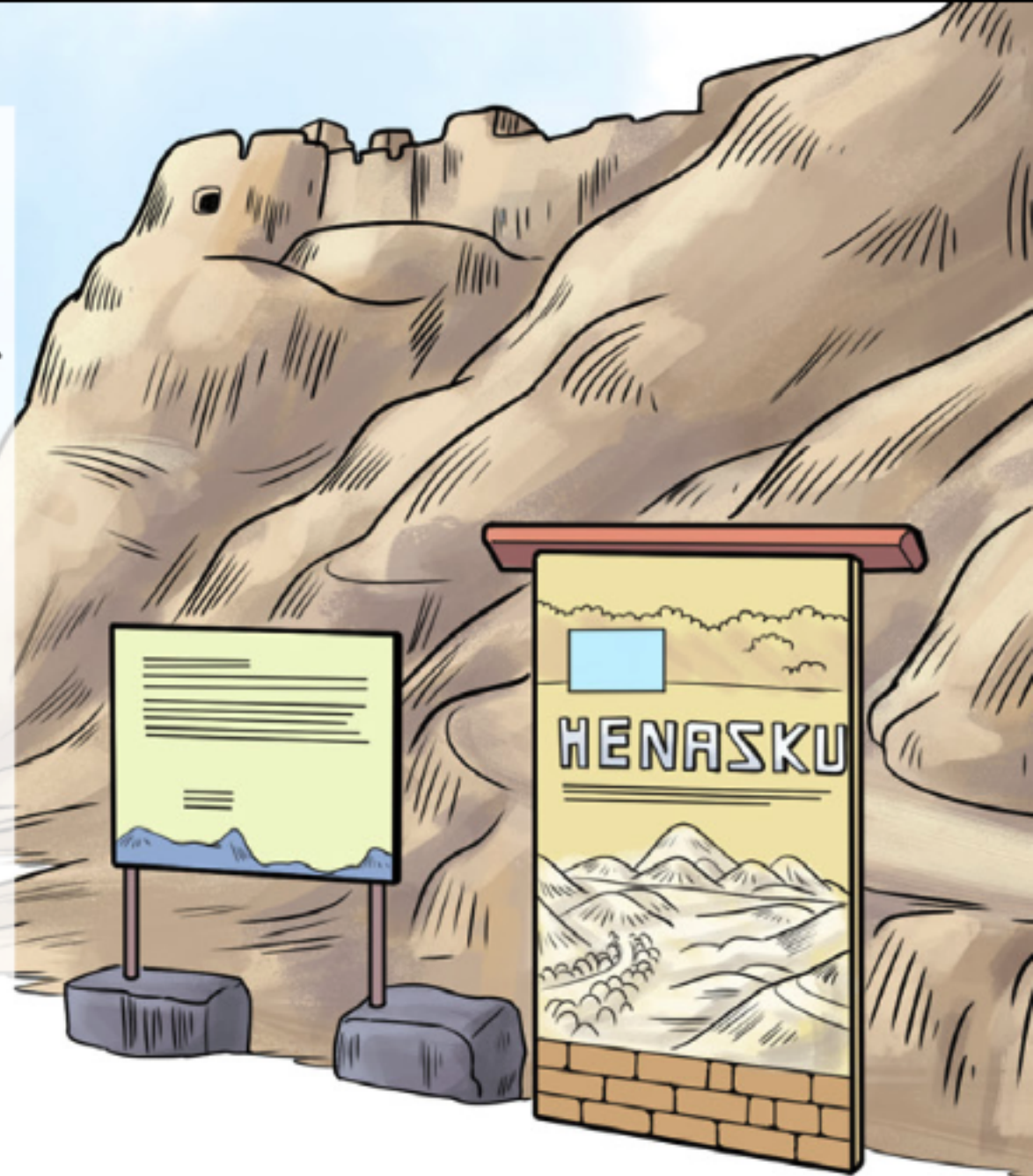
It is believed that when the army of the Namgyal Dynasty passed through the mountains they looked up and spotted a statue, exclaiming "Erna-Sku!" – which means, a place where there is a statue. That is how Henasku got its name.





In 1840, Ladakh was invaded by Dogra rulers and many kingdoms were defeated and forced to surrender. Henasku always remained unconquered because of its strategic location.

Despite changing times, the village still manages to preserve its culture and heritage. There is a small cultural heritage museum in the village that holds fascinating stories of the time gone by. The villagers in Henasku, also sing and tell many folktales including stories about Zbalus, the invisible people who protect their land and people.



Today, monarchy does not exist anymore but the present queen, Phuntsok Angmo, continues to be respected. The people of Henasku lead a simple, peaceful life, practicing agriculture and rearing their livestock. The community also focuses on developing and promoting its own handicraft. Henasku has a strong connection with the fine arts and the local artisans are experts at wood carving, using traditional tools.

**CONTRIBUTED BY  
LITTLE LOCAL, ROOTS LADAKH AND  
THE PEOPLE OF HENASKU, LADAKH.**





LONG AGO, IN A MONASTERY IN TIBET, AN OLD MONK HAD A VISION WHILE MEDITATING.

## THE EXTRAORDINARY BOY

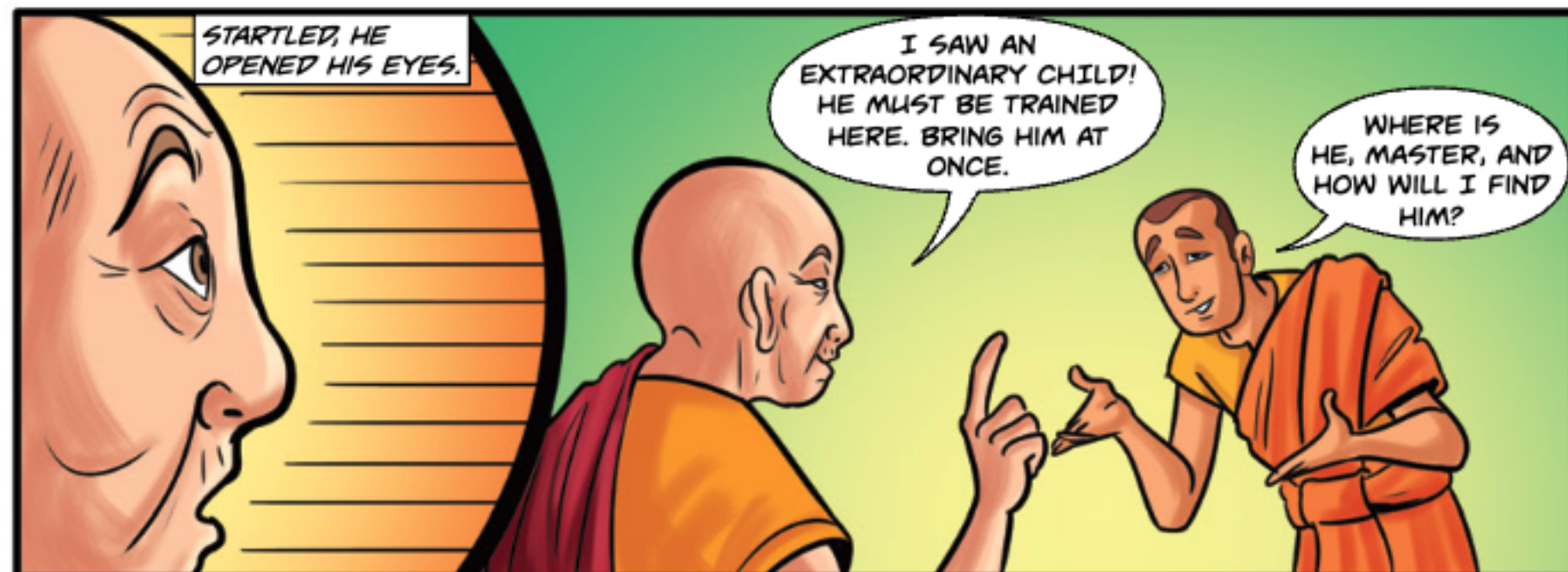
A FOLKTALE FROM LADAKH



STARTLED, HE OPENED HIS EYES.

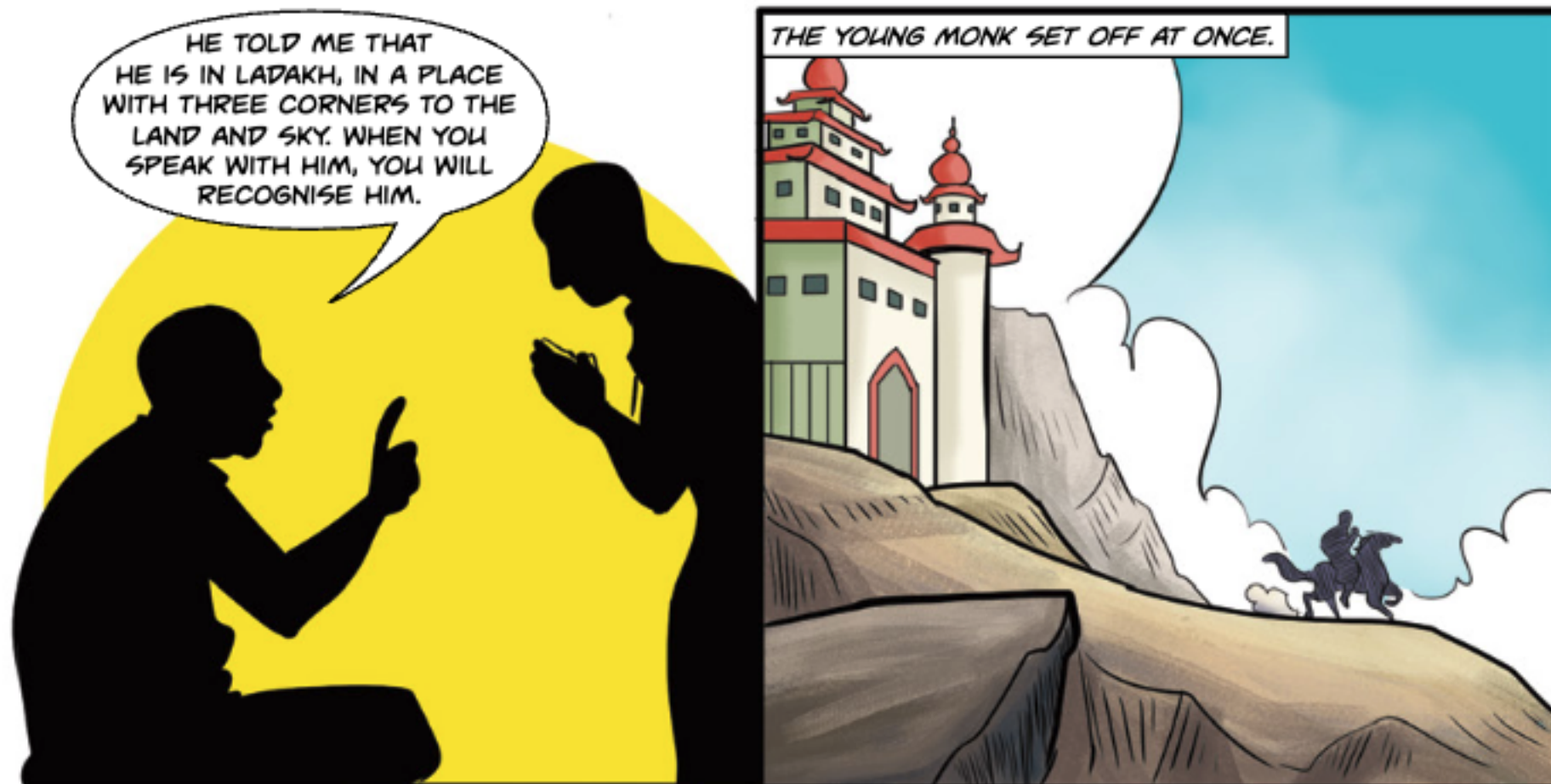
I SAW AN EXTRAORDINARY CHILD! HE MUST BE TRAINED HERE. BRING HIM AT ONCE.

WHERE IS HE, MASTER, AND HOW WILL I FIND HIM?



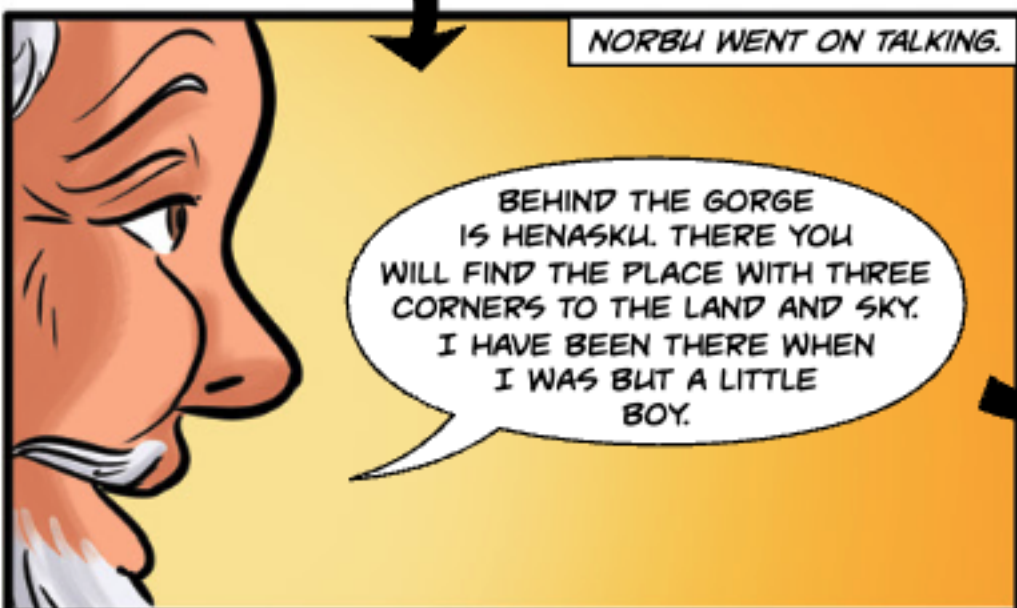
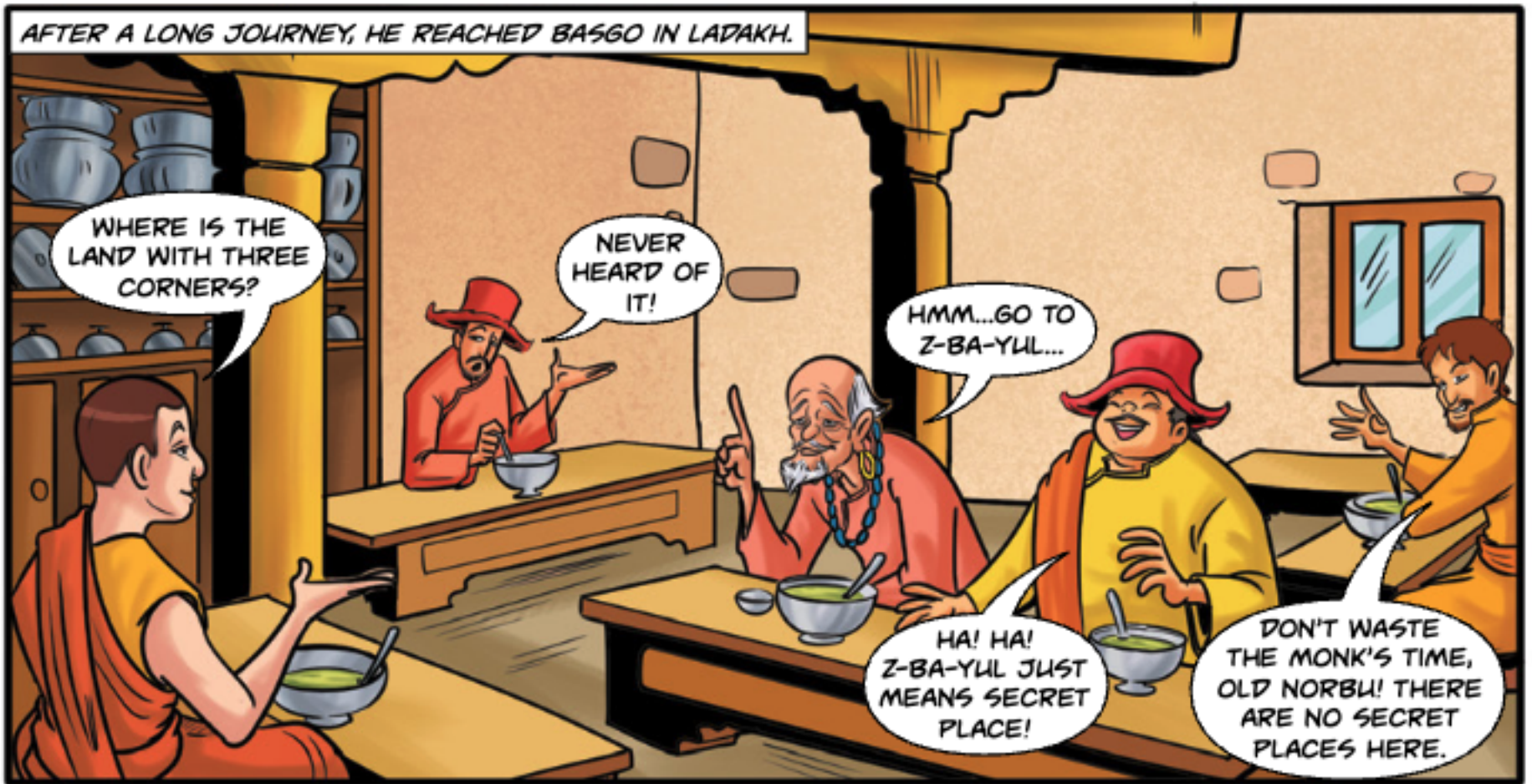
HE TOLD ME THAT HE IS IN LADAKH, IN A PLACE WITH THREE CORNERS TO THE LAND AND SKY. WHEN YOU SPEAK WITH HIM, YOU WILL RECOGNISE HIM.

THE YOUNG MONK SET OFF AT ONCE.





AFTER A LONG JOURNEY, HE REACHED BASGO IN LADAKH.

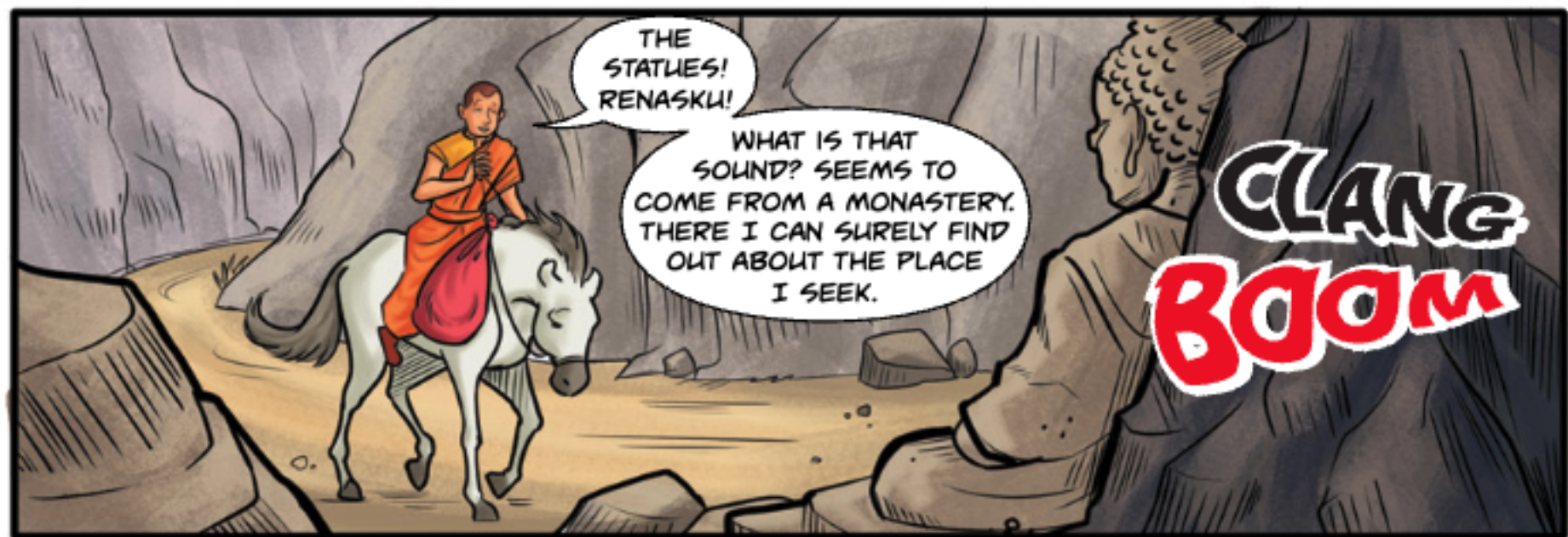


SINCE NO ONE ELSE HAD ANY CLUE, THE YOUNG MONK FOLLOWED OLD NORBU'S LEAD AND WENT WEST ON THE SILK ROUTE.





AFTER MANY DAYS, HE REACHED A NARROW GORGE IN THE MOUNTAIN, HIDDEN FROM THE MAIN ROAD.

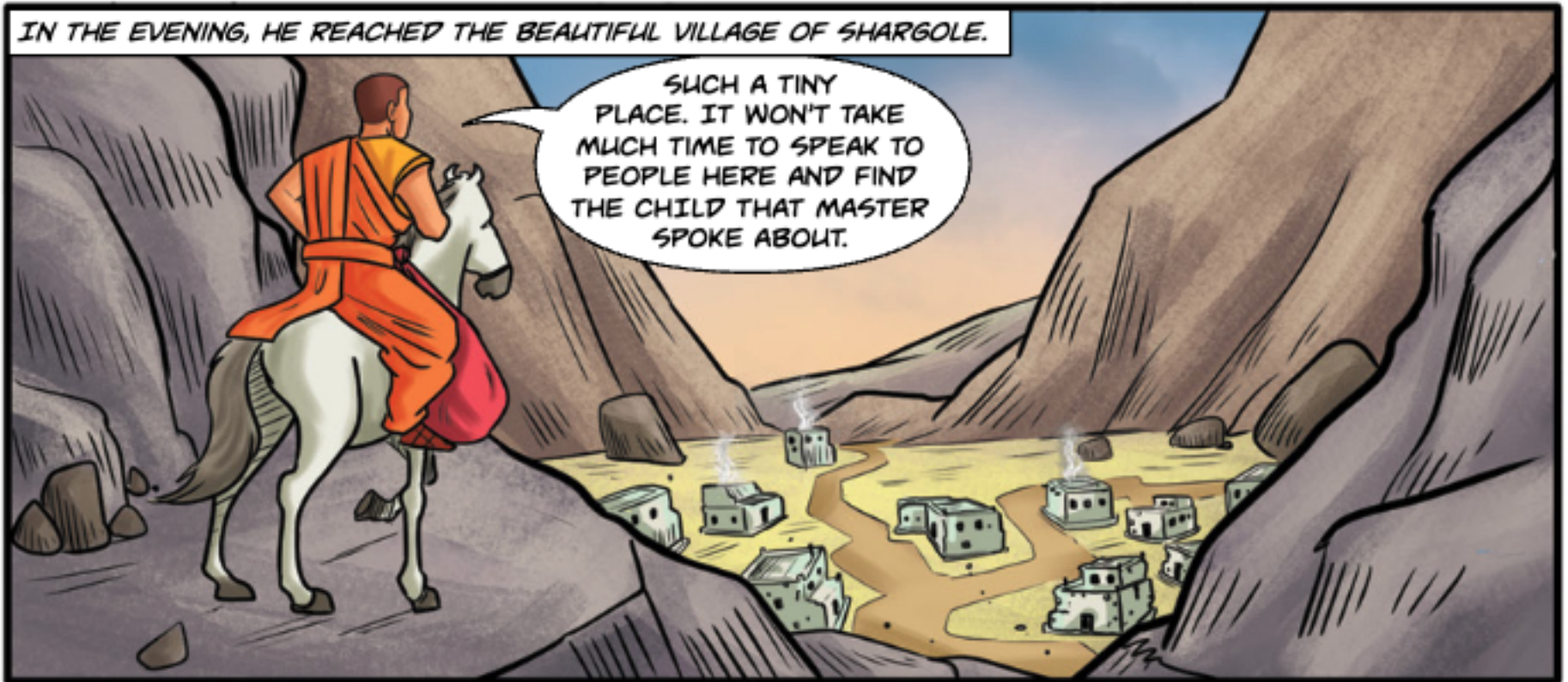


AS HE WENT DEEPER INTO THE NARROW GORGE, HE SAW A MONASTERY WITH A WHITE DOORWAY.



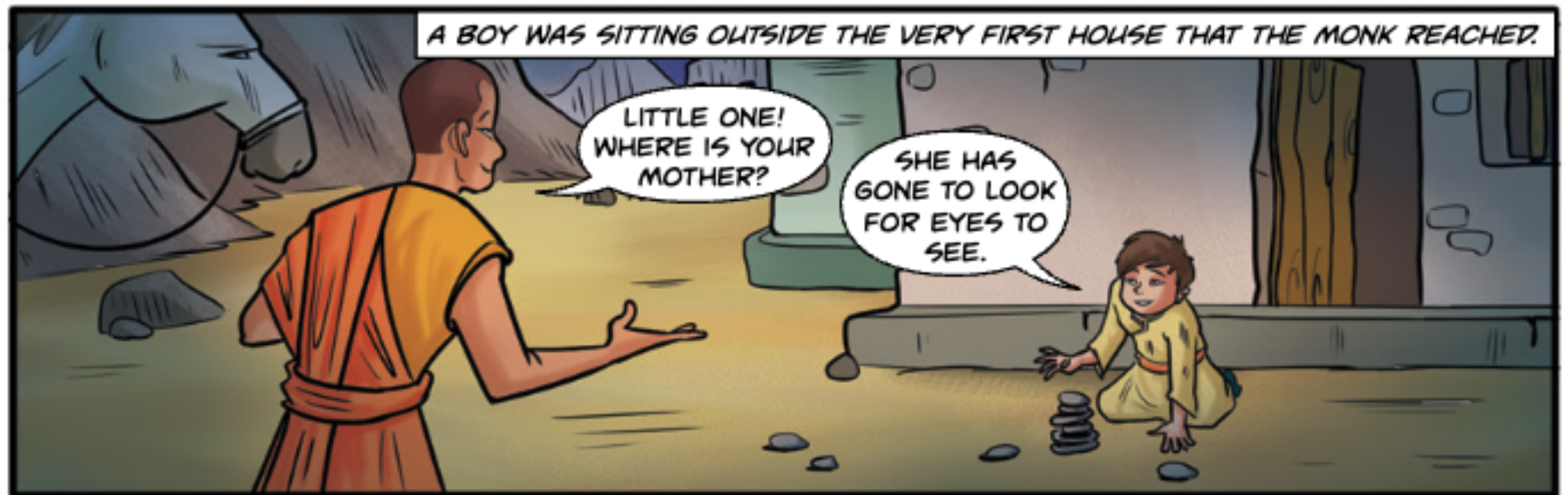


IN THE EVENING, HE REACHED THE BEAUTIFUL VILLAGE OF SHARGOLE.



SUCH A TINY PLACE. IT WON'T TAKE MUCH TIME TO SPEAK TO PEOPLE HERE AND FIND THE CHILD THAT MASTER SPOKE ABOUT.

A BOY WAS SITTING OUTSIDE THE VERY FIRST HOUSE THAT THE MONK REACHED.



LITTLE ONE! WHERE IS YOUR MOTHER?

SHE HAS GONE TO LOOK FOR EYES TO SEE.

THE YOUNG MONK WAS INTRIGUED. HE SAT DOWN NEXT TO THE BOY.



WHERE IS YOUR FATHER?

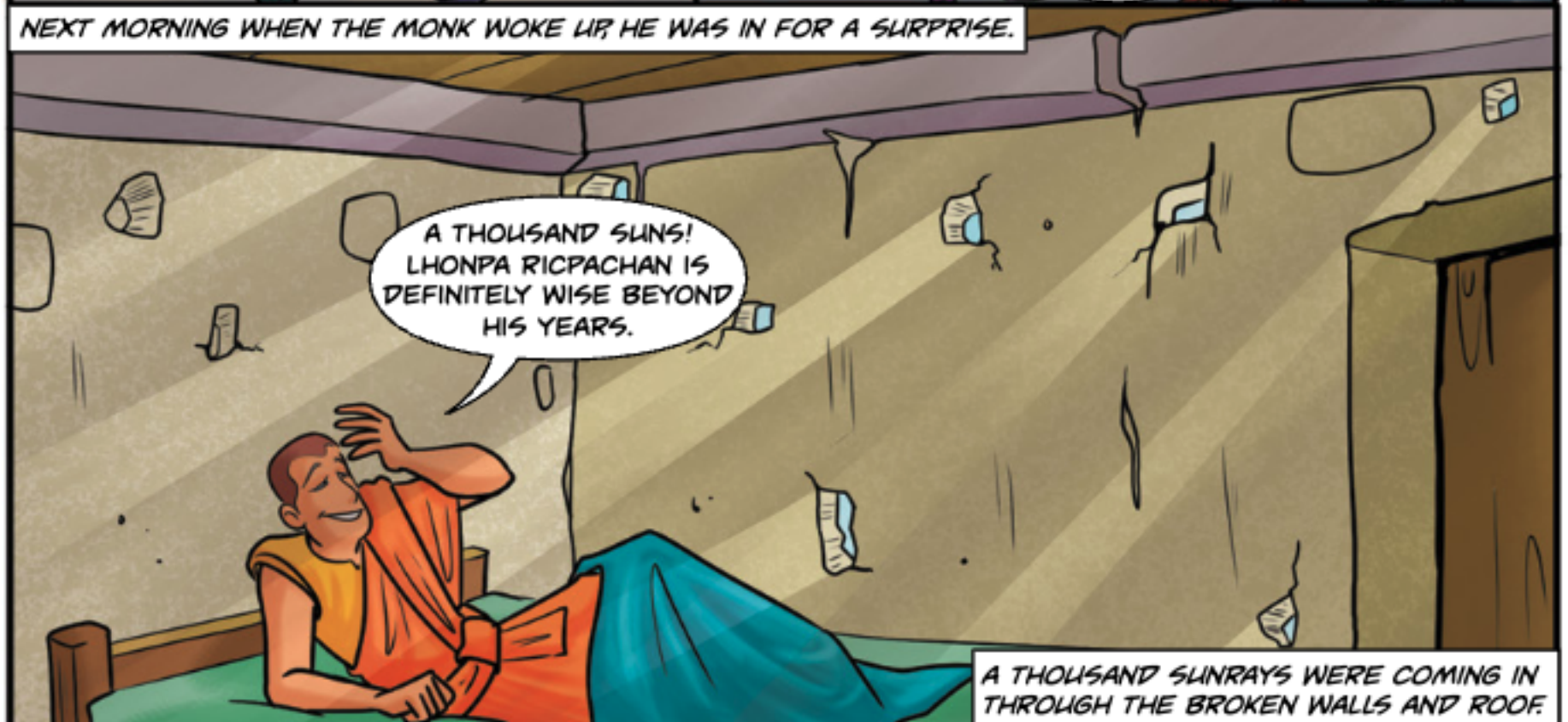
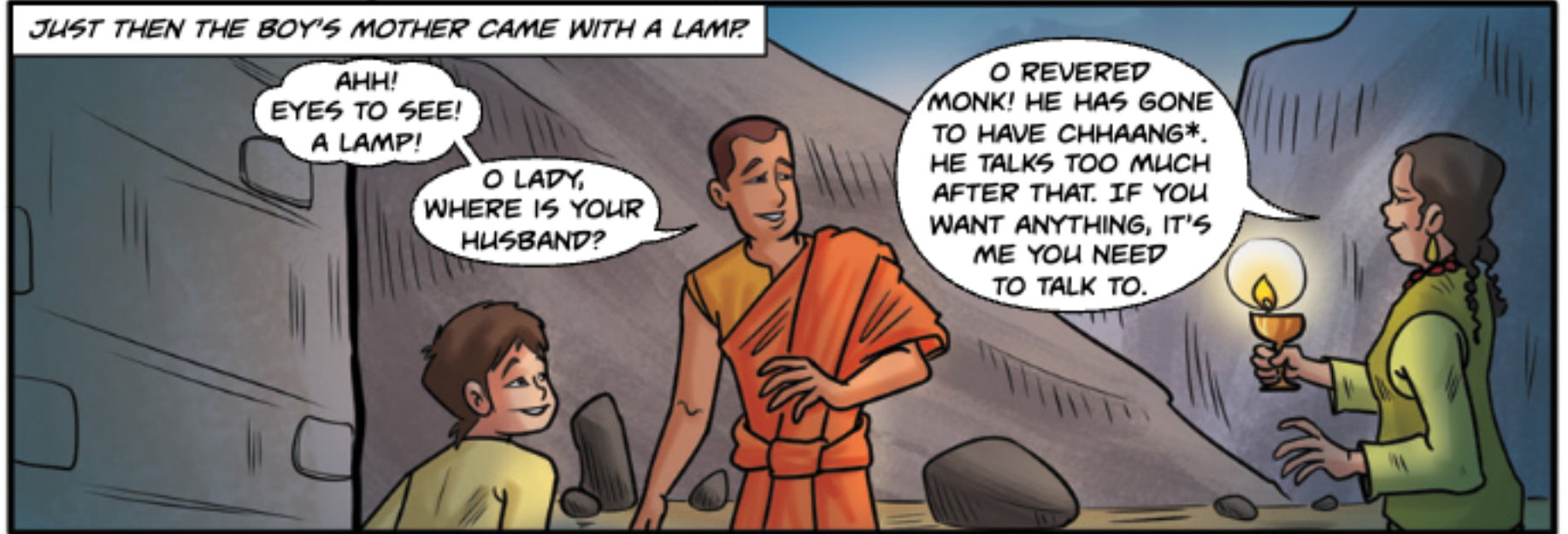
HE HAS GONE TO LOOK FOR WORDS TO SPEAK.

DO YOU GET ENOUGH TO EAT AND DRINK? HOW MANY GOATS DO YOU HAVE?

I HAVE A HUNDRED GOATS. YES, I HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT AS MY HOUSE IS GLORIFIED BY A THOUSAND SUNS.

THE MONK WAS SURPRISED BECAUSE THE HOUSE WAS DILAPIDATED AND THE BOY LOOKED VERY POOR.





\*A TIBETAN RICE DRINK



WITH THE PARENTS' PERMISSION, THE YOUNG MONK AND LHONPA RICPACHAN LEFT THE VILLAGE.

CHANGI  
KHAR, YAR NGOYE  
SHATHAQ, MAR NGOYE  
BRANGTHAQ<sup>\*</sup>

WE WILL REACH  
THE SILK ROUTE, ONCE  
WE CROSS HENASKU  
KHAR\*.

THIS WAS THE FIRST OF THE PROPHECIES THAT LHONPA RICPACHAN MADE.

AS THEY TRAVELLED ON TO TIBET, THE CHILD SANG A DITTY WHICH IS STILL CHANTED FONDLY IN LADAKH.

DAMLA DAGBU DAGBU KHAR,  
MINDOGI CHAQBU PASHKUM KHAR,  
DUNLA BU KHURBI STAQTSE KHAR,  
RGYABA RO KHURBI KHARBU KHAR

OH, SUCH  
A LOVELY SONG  
ABOUT ALL THESE  
PLACES, CHILD!

THE ONE IN THE CORNER IS DAQGBU KHAR,  
LIKE A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS IS PASHKUM KHAR,  
LIKE A CHILD IN HER MOTHER'S LAP IS STAQTSE KHAR,  
LIKE A MAN CARRYING A DEAD WEIGHT IS KHARBU KHAR.

HAPPILY SINGING AND TALKING, THE YOUNG MONK AND THE CHILD REACHED TIBET.  
LHONPA RICPACHAN BECAME A VERY RESPECTED MONK WHEN HE GREW UP.

\*FORT ON TOP OF A HILL

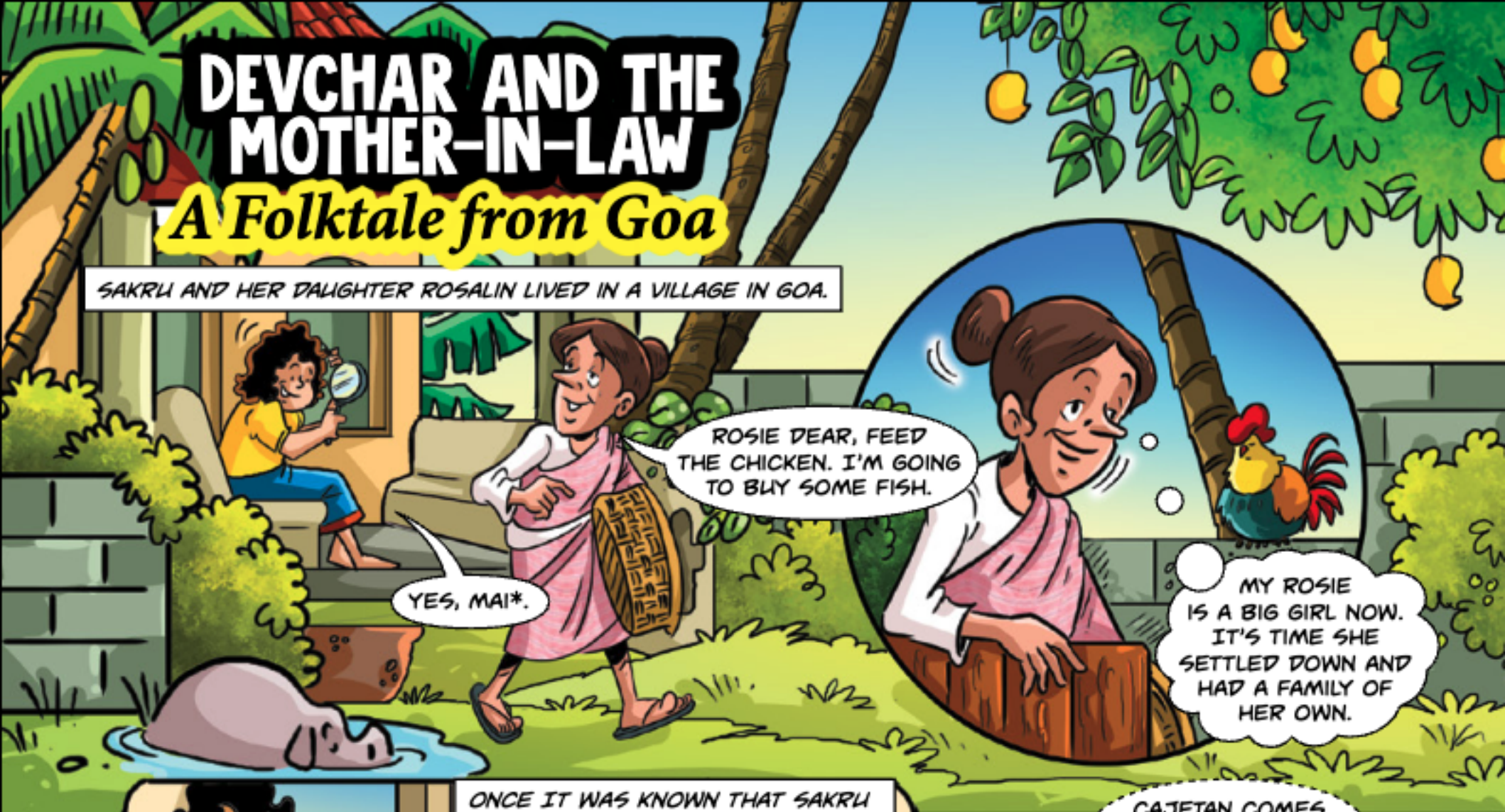
<sup>\*</sup>THE PEOPLE HERE WILL HAVE TO WORK HARDER THAN USUAL



# DEVCHAR AND THE MOTHER-IN-LAW

## A Folktale from Goa

SAKRU AND HER DAUGHTER ROSALIN LIVED IN A VILLAGE IN GOA.



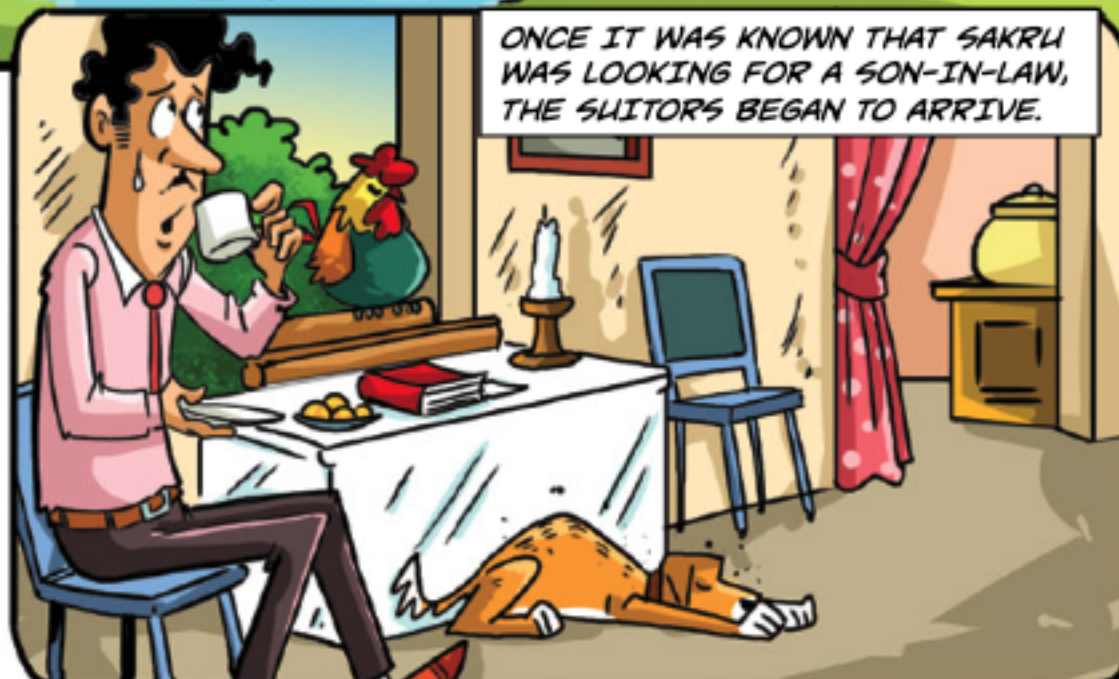
ROSIE DEAR, FEED THE CHICKEN. I'M GOING TO BUY SOME FISH.

YES, MAI\*.

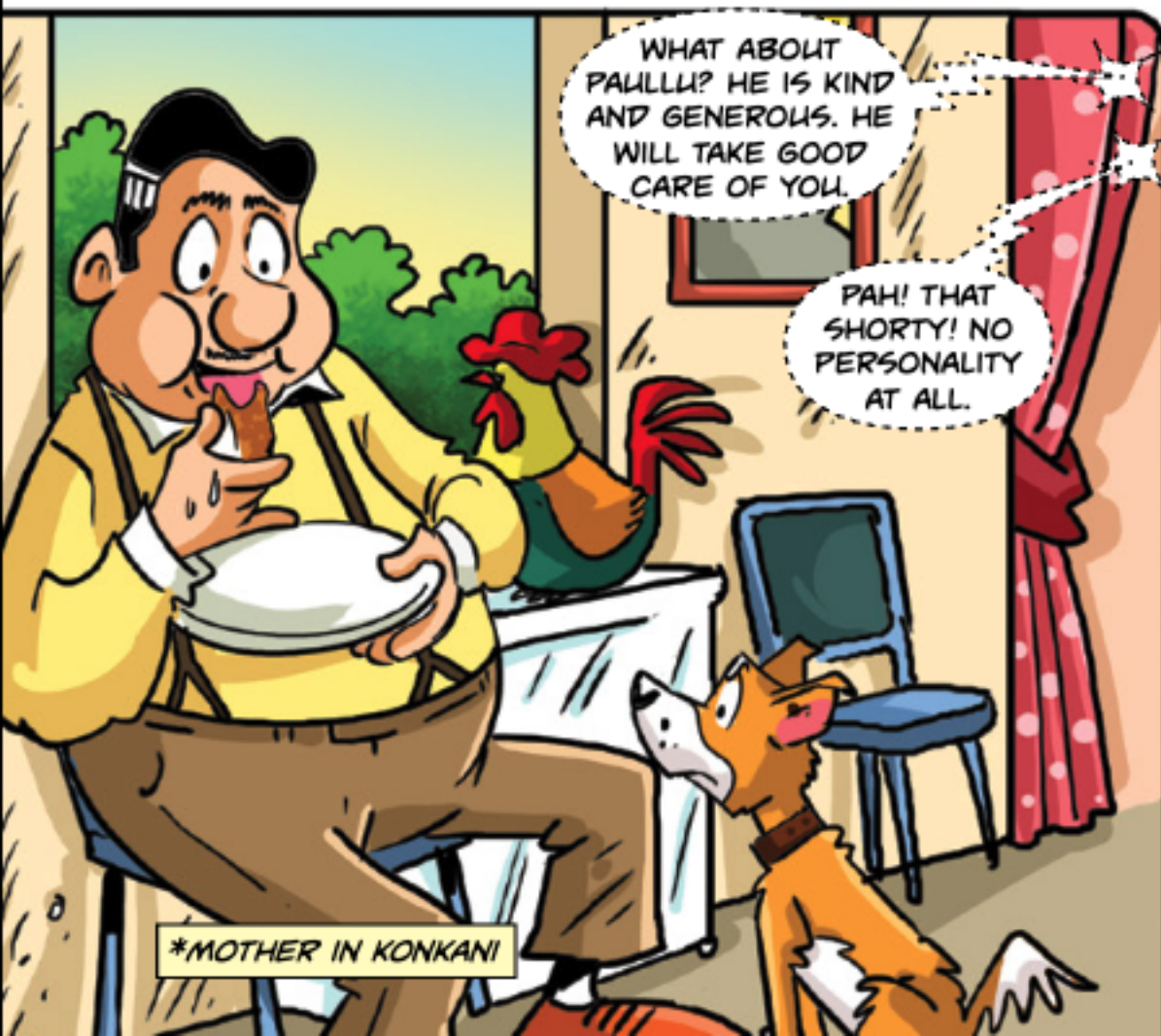
MY ROSIE IS A BIG GIRL NOW. IT'S TIME SHE SETTLED DOWN AND HAD A FAMILY OF HER OWN.

CAJETAN COMES FROM A GOOD FAMILY. HE HOLDS A STEADY JOB TOO.

MAI, I CAN'T MARRY HIM. HE IS TOO TALL! I WON'T LOOK GOOD NEXT TO HIM.



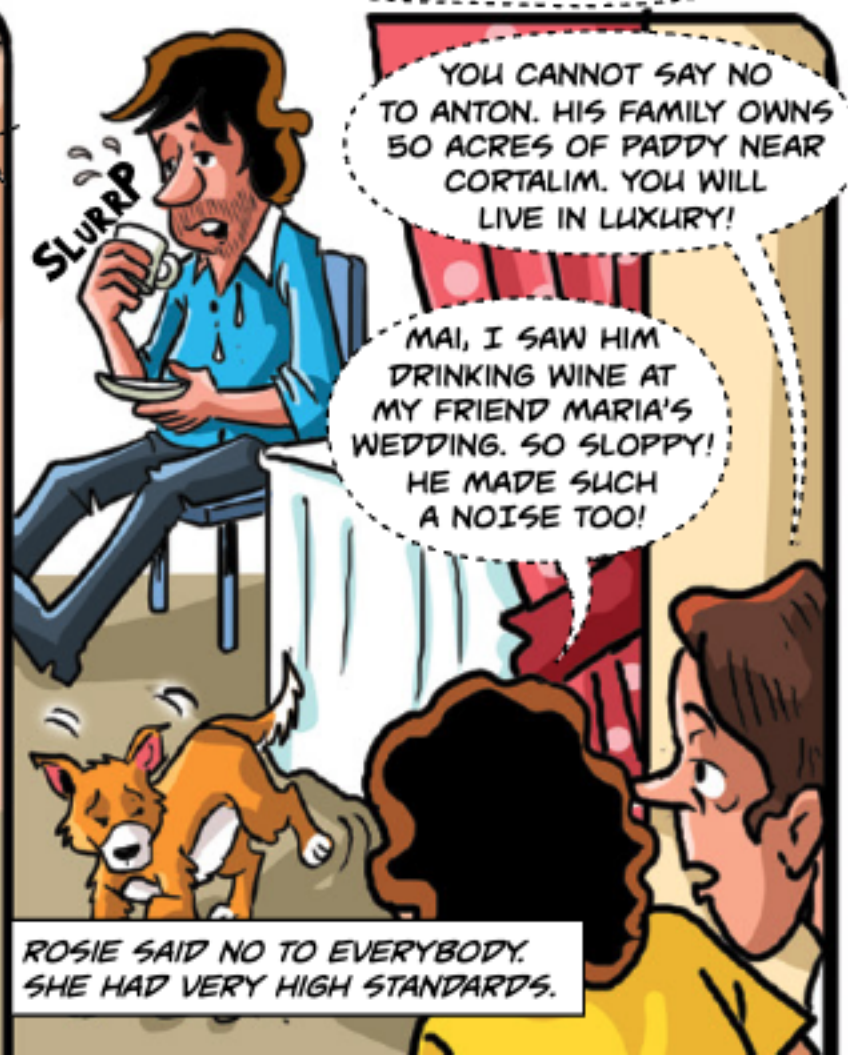
ONCE IT WAS KNOWN THAT SAKRU WAS LOOKING FOR A SON-IN-LAW, THE SUITORS BEGAN TO ARRIVE.



WHAT ABOUT PAULLU? HE IS KIND AND GENEROUS. HE WILL TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOU.

PAH! THAT SHORTY! NO PERSONALITY AT ALL.

\*MOTHER IN KONKANI



YOU CANNOT SAY NO TO ANTON. HIS FAMILY OWNS 50 ACRES OF PADDY NEAR CORTALIM. YOU WILL LIVE IN LUXURY!

MAI, I SAW HIM DRINKING WINE AT MY FRIEND MARIA'S WEDDING. SO SLOPPY! HE MADE SUCH A NOISE TOO!

ROSIE SAID NO TO EVERYBODY. SHE HAD VERY HIGH STANDARDS.

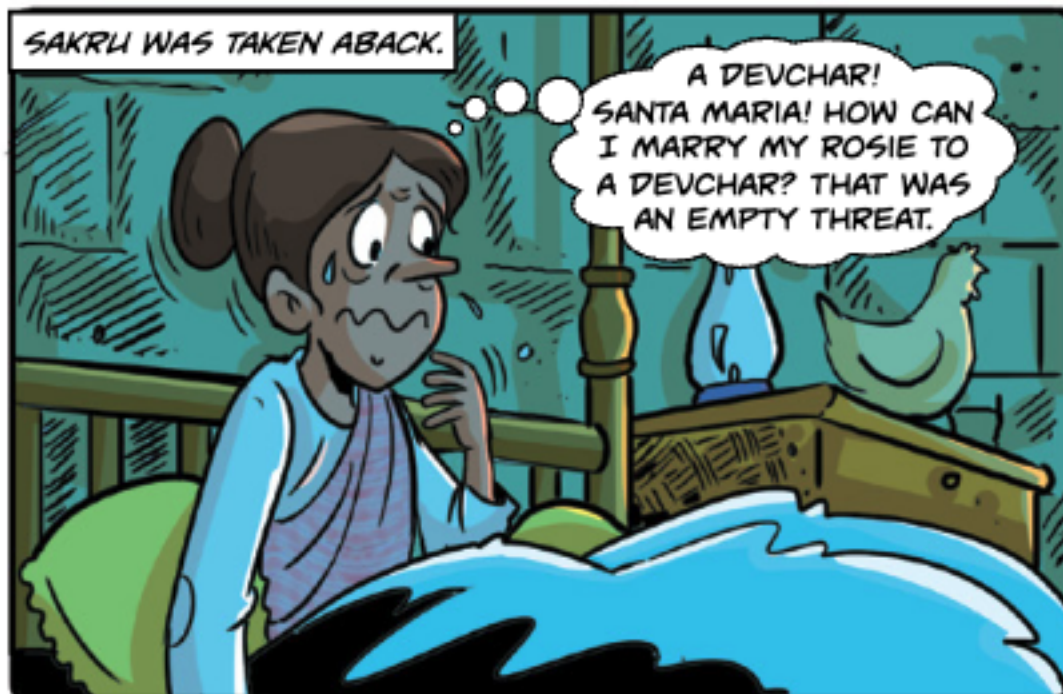


HOWEVER, SAKRU HAD HAD ENOUGH OF ROSIE'S ATTITUDE. THAT NIGHT —

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT —

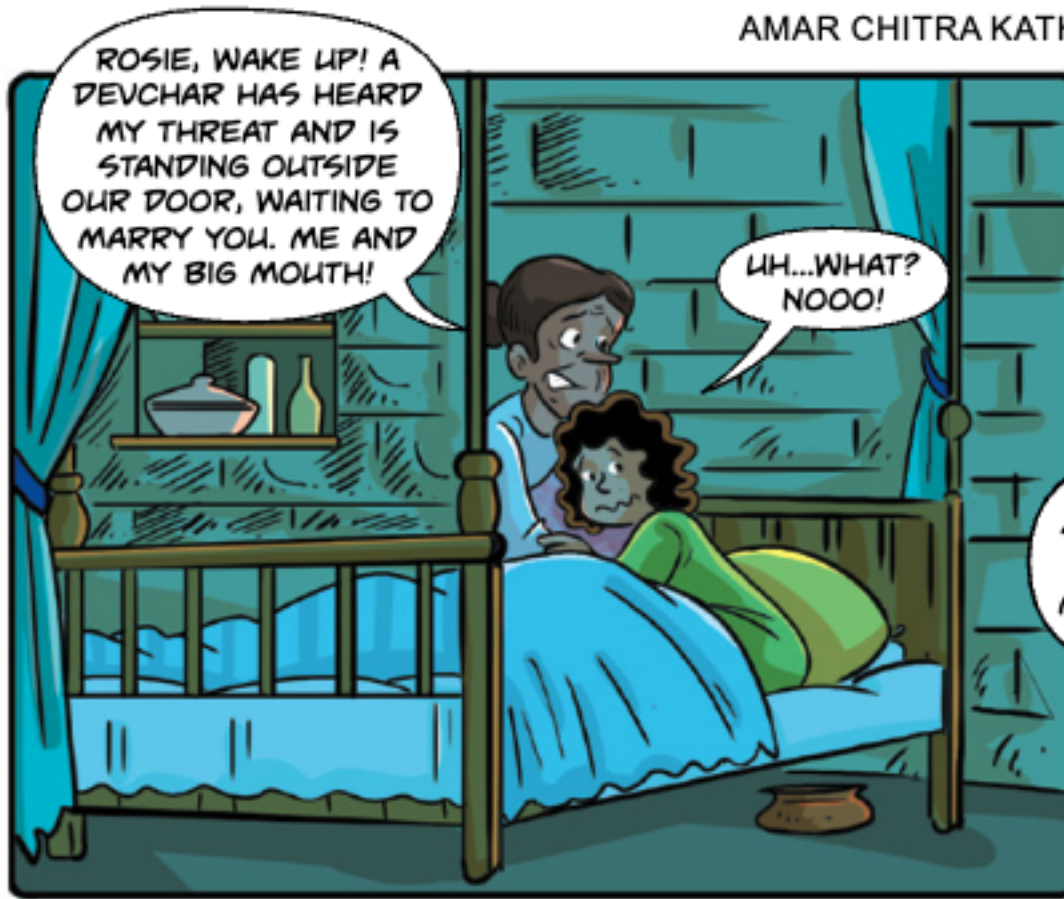


UNFORTUNATELY, A PASSING DEVCHAR HEARD SAKRU.



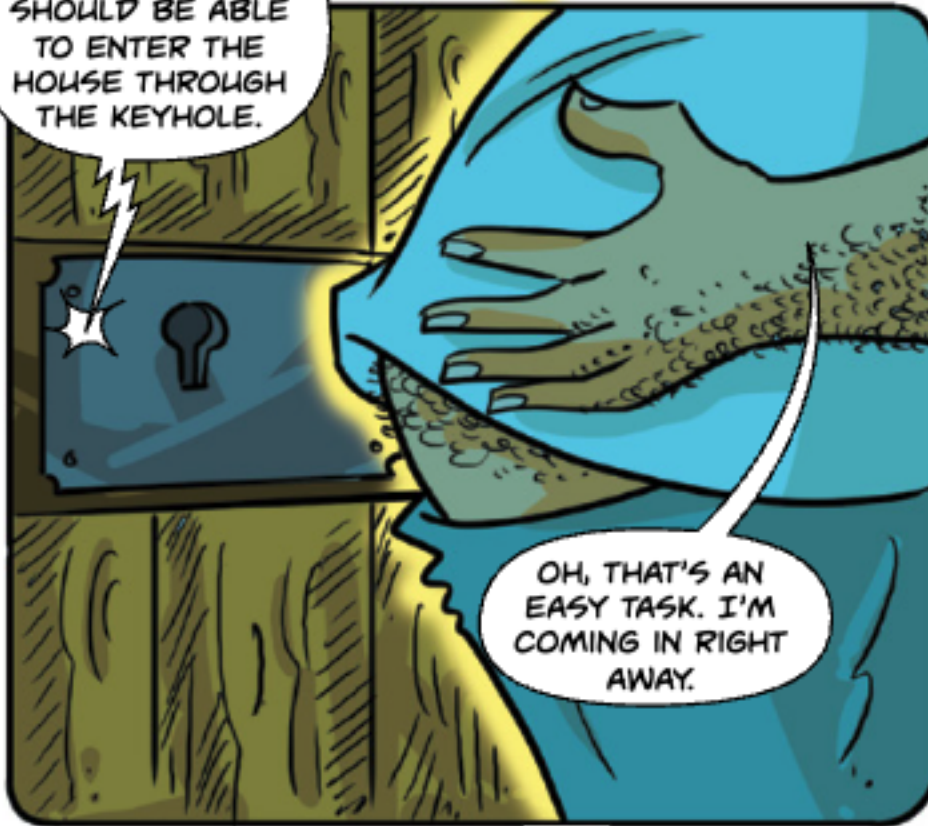
\*A GHOST  
\*SON-IN-LAW IN KONKANI







IF YOU ARE A DEVCHAR YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENTER THE HOUSE THROUGH THE KEYHOLE.



OH, THAT'S AN EASY TASK. I'M COMING IN RIGHT AWAY.



WAIT, WAIT!  
LET ME GET A  
GARLAND TO  
WELCOME YOU  
WITH.

HEH HEH!  
YES, OF COURSE.

SAKRU QUICKLY WENT TO THE KITCHEN AND PICKED UP A BIG BOTTLE.



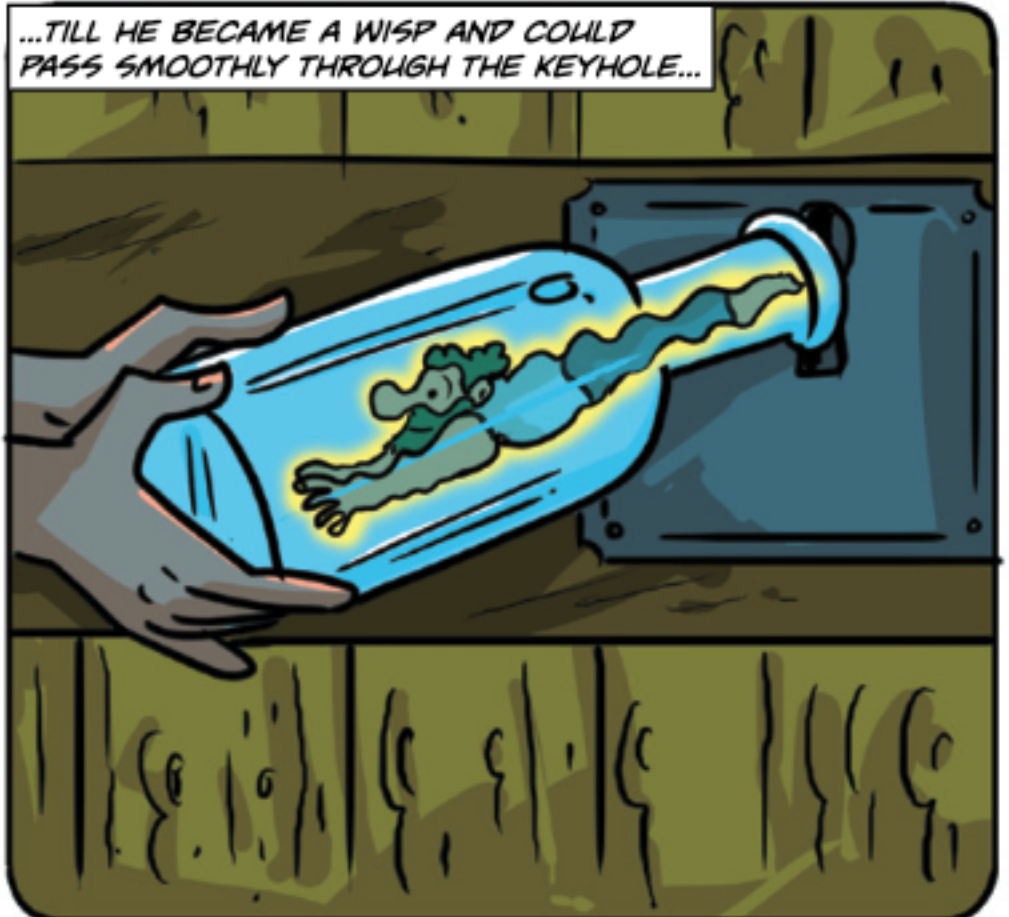
THEN —



OK, ZAVLIM.  
ONE, TWO,  
THREE...ENTER!



THE DEVCHAR MADE HIMSELF SMALLER AND SMALLER...



...TILL HE BECAME A WISP AND COULD PASS SMOOTHLY THROUGH THE KEYHOLE...



...AND STRAIGHT INTO THE WAITING BOTTLE!



NEXT MORNING, SAKRU TOOK THE BOTTLE TO THE FOREST...



...AND THREW IT INTO A DEEP WELL.



THE DEVCHAR TRIED TO GET PEOPLE PASSING BY TO OPEN THE BOTTLE.



THE GOANS BELIEVE THAT THE DEVCHAR IS STILL JUMPING AROUND IN THE BOTTLE, WAITING TO BE RELEASED. AS FOR ROSIE, SHE GOT MARRIED TO CAJETAN AND ALWAYS TOOK GOOD CARE OF SAKRU.



# THE MOUSE'S SHARE

A Folktale From Maharashtra

IT WAS SOWING TIME FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE WARLI TRIBE. EVERYONE WAS BUSY GETTING SEEDS READY, ALL EXCEPT HEMRAJ AND MADHURA.



\*GOD  
\*MONITOR LIZARD

\*\*SISTER IN MARATHI



HMM... I HAVE LIVED LONG AND EXPLORED MANY FURROWS. I KNOW THAT THE FURROWS HAVE NO SEEDS. MAYBE YOU COULD FIND HELP NEAR THE SEA.



THANK YOU, TAI.



AT THE SHORELINE, A CURIOUS CRAB CAME DANCING TOWARDS HEMRAJ.

SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING, DADA\*?



YES, SEEDS. THAT'S WHAT I AM LOOKING FOR. I NEED THEM FOR SOWING IN MY FIELD.



SEEDS. UMM... ARE THEY ROUND?



YES, SOME ARE.



IN A SHORT WHILE —

UHM... AND SMOOTH?

YES, SOME ARE.



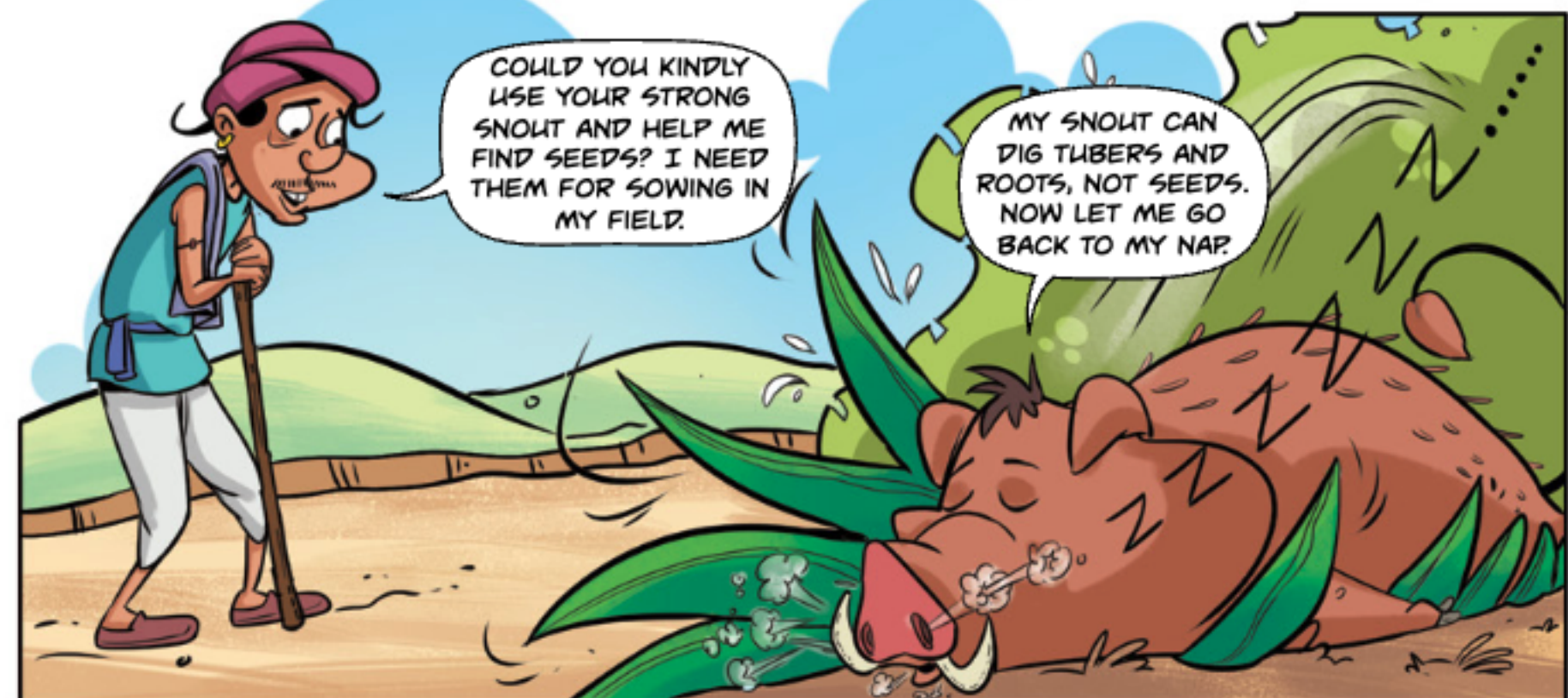
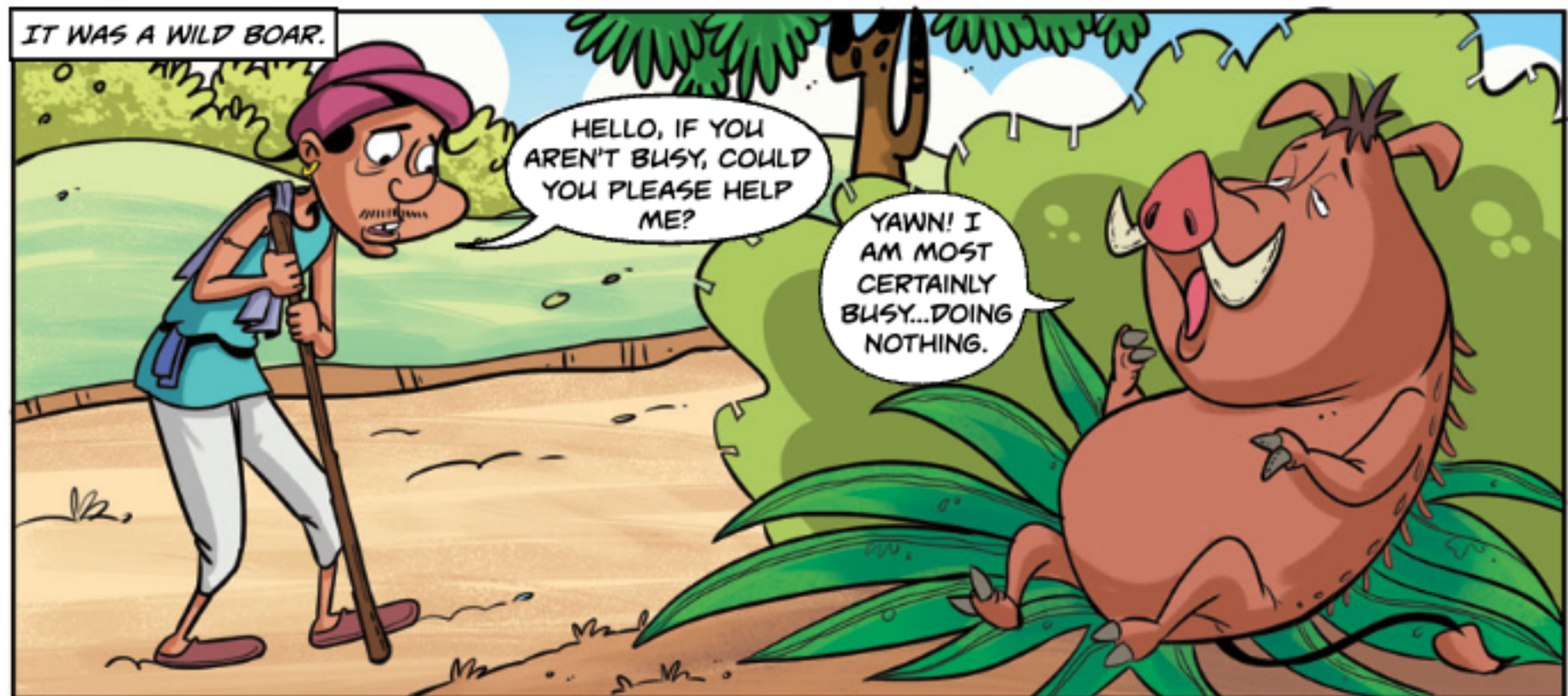
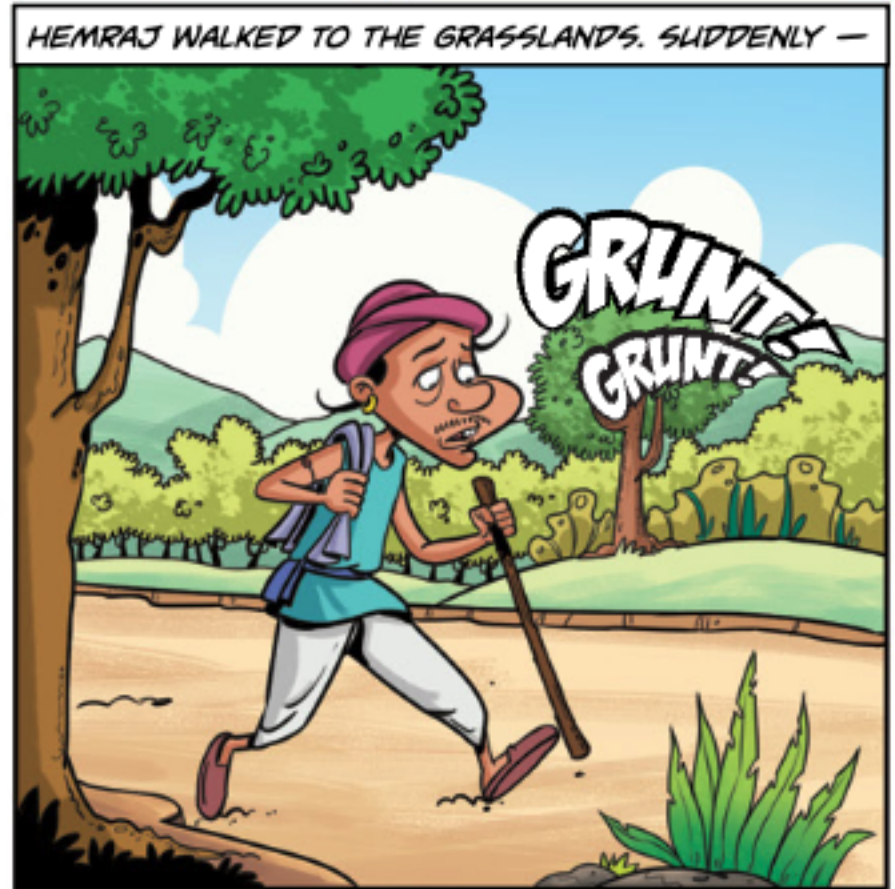
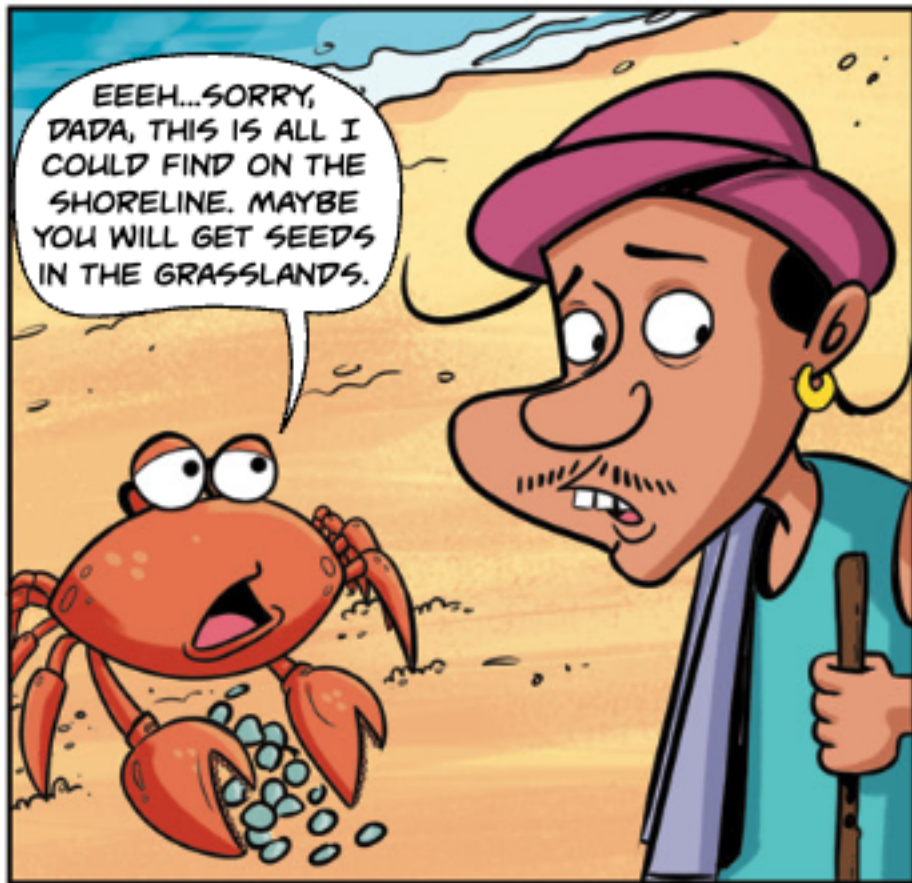
JUST WAIT. I'LL BE BACK IN A MINUTE.

WE CALL THEM PEBBLES IN OUR CRAB-Y-LANGUAGE.

O CRAB, THESE ARE PEBBLES IN HUMAN LANGUAGE TOO!

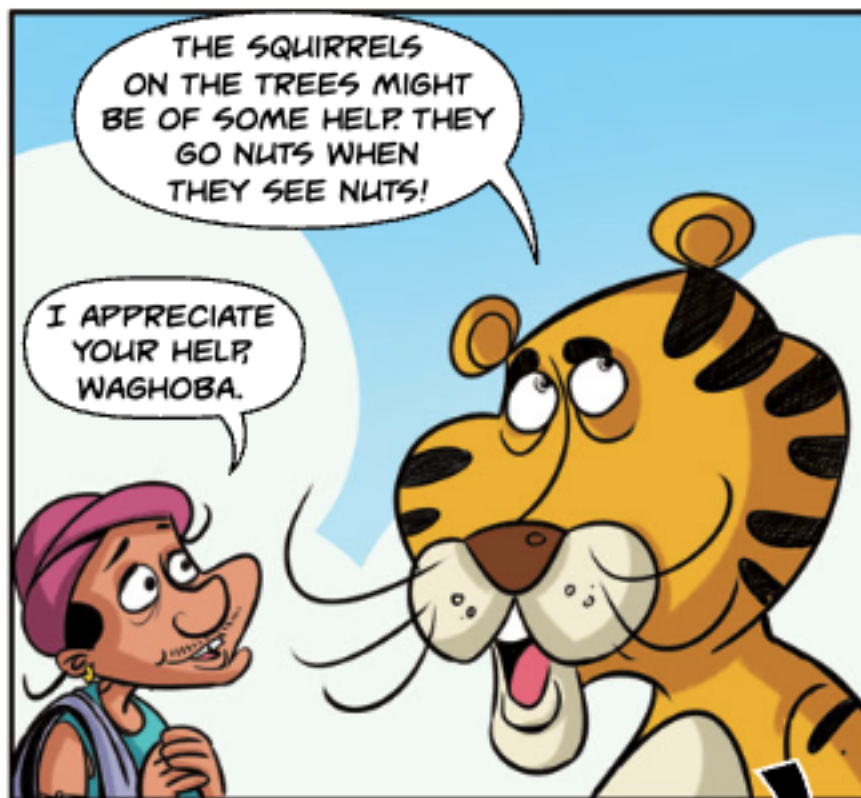
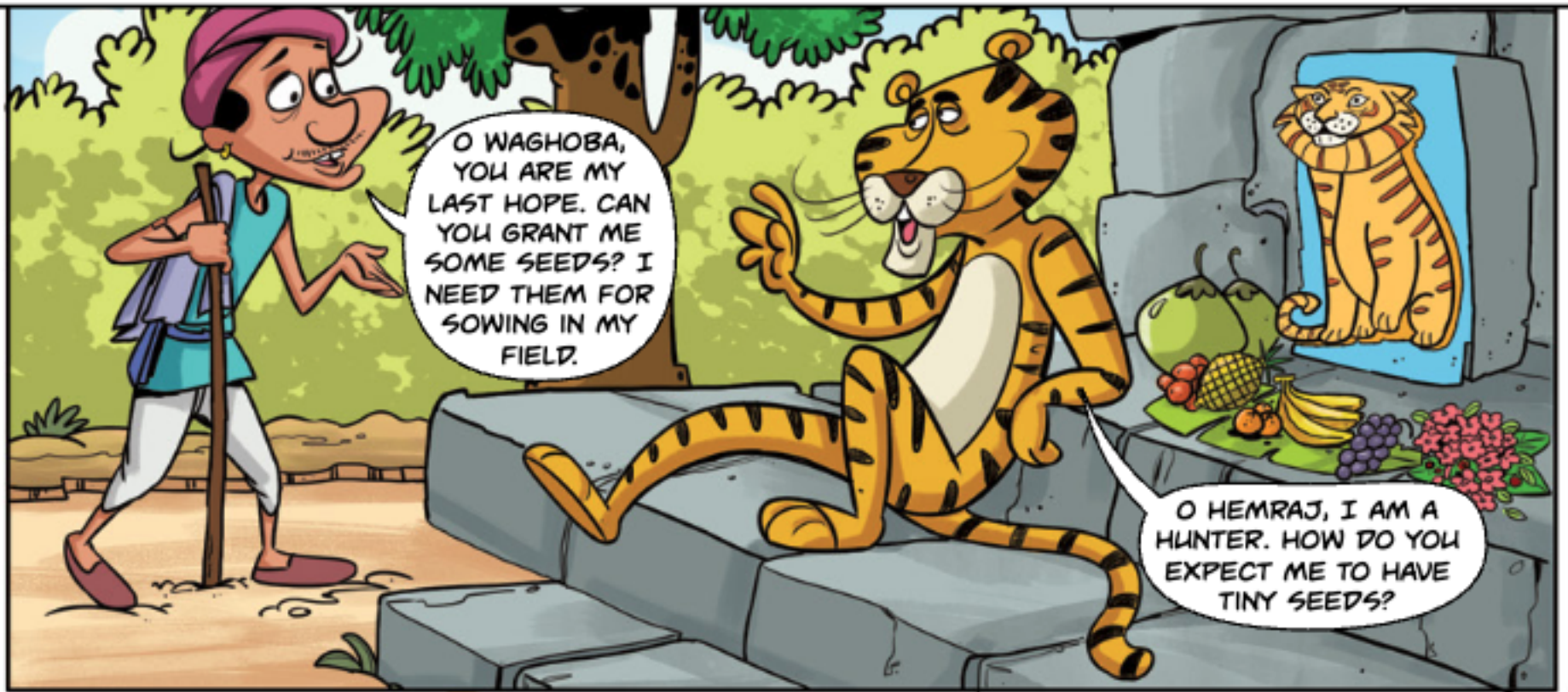








AFTER WALKING FOR SOME TIME, HEMRAJ CAME ACROSS A WAGHOBA\* TEMPLE WHERE A TIGER WAS RESTING.

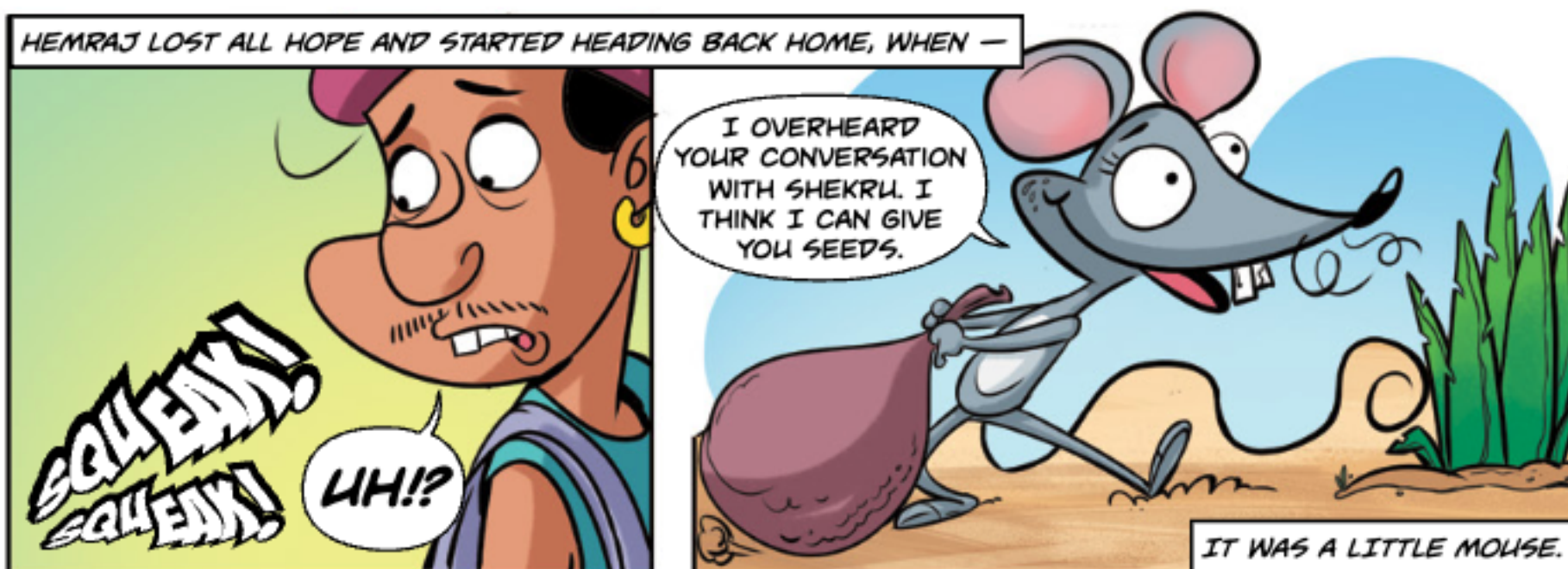


HEMRAJ SAT DOWN, TIRED AND IN DESPAIR. JUST THEN —



\*TIGER. THE SUFFIX 'BA' IS A TERM OF RESPECT.









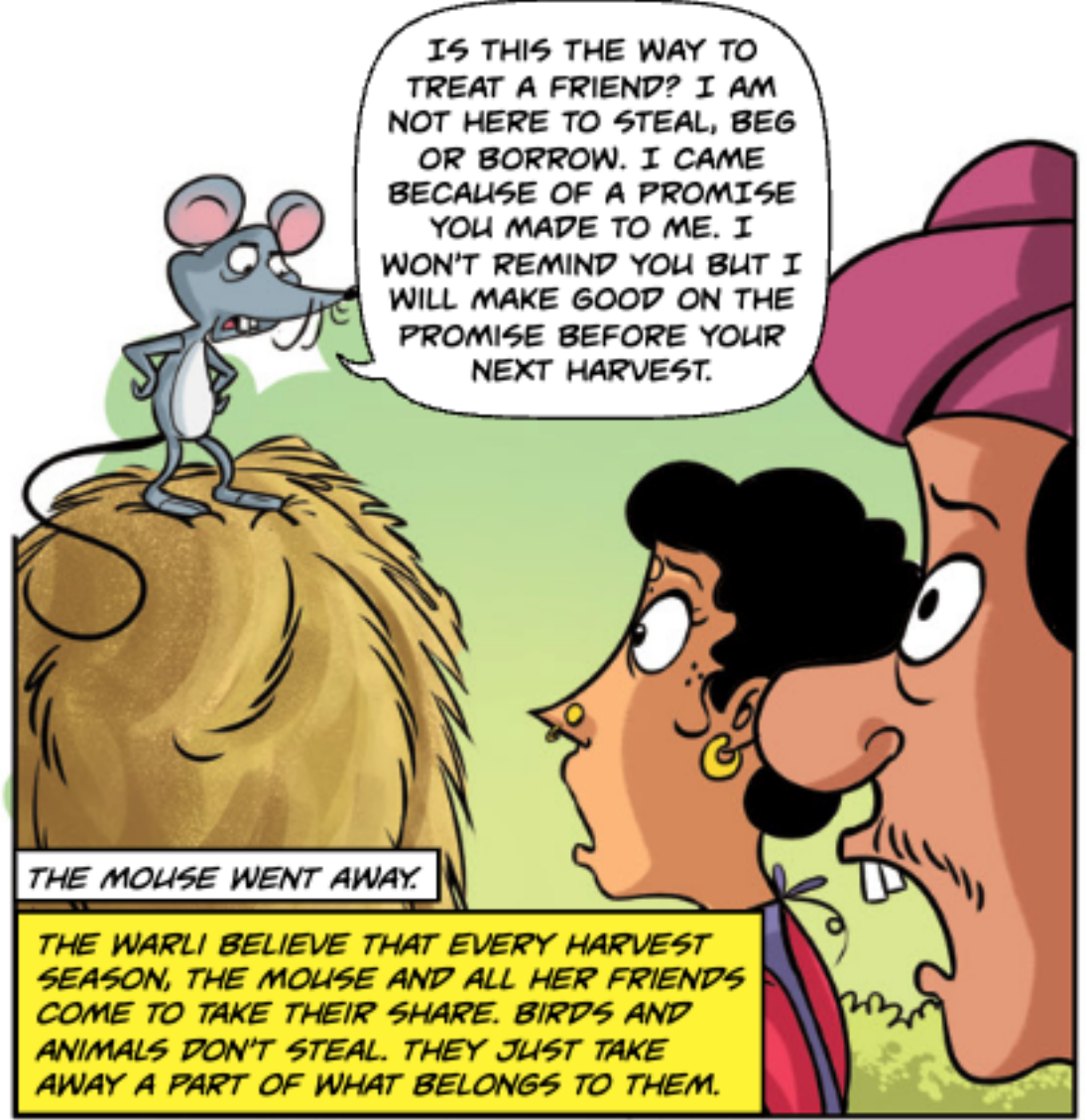
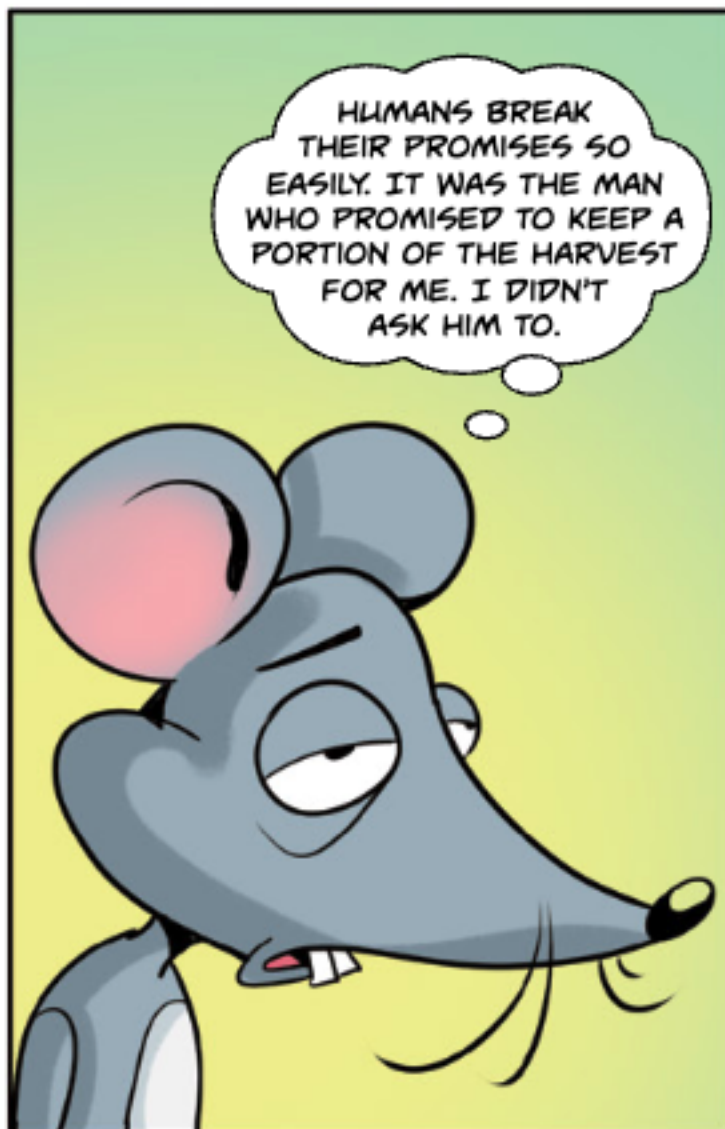
MADHURA WAS DELIGHTED TO SEE HEMRAJ RETURN WITH SEEDS. THE COUPLE WASTED NO TIME AND SOWED THEIR FIELD.



\*MOUSE



ONE DAY, WHEN THE COUPLE WAS THRESHING THE GOLDEN HARVEST —



THE MOUSE WENT AWAY.

THE WARLI BELIEVE THAT EVERY HARVEST SEASON, THE MOUSE AND ALL HER FRIENDS COME TO TAKE THEIR SHARE. BIRDS AND ANIMALS DON'T STEAL. THEY JUST TAKE AWAY A PART OF WHAT BELONGS TO THEM.



# CLEVER NARAYANI

A folktale from Bihar

IN RAJGIR, A SMALL VILLAGE IN THE NALANDA DISTRICT OF BIHAR, LIVED A POOR MAN CALLED NANDU.

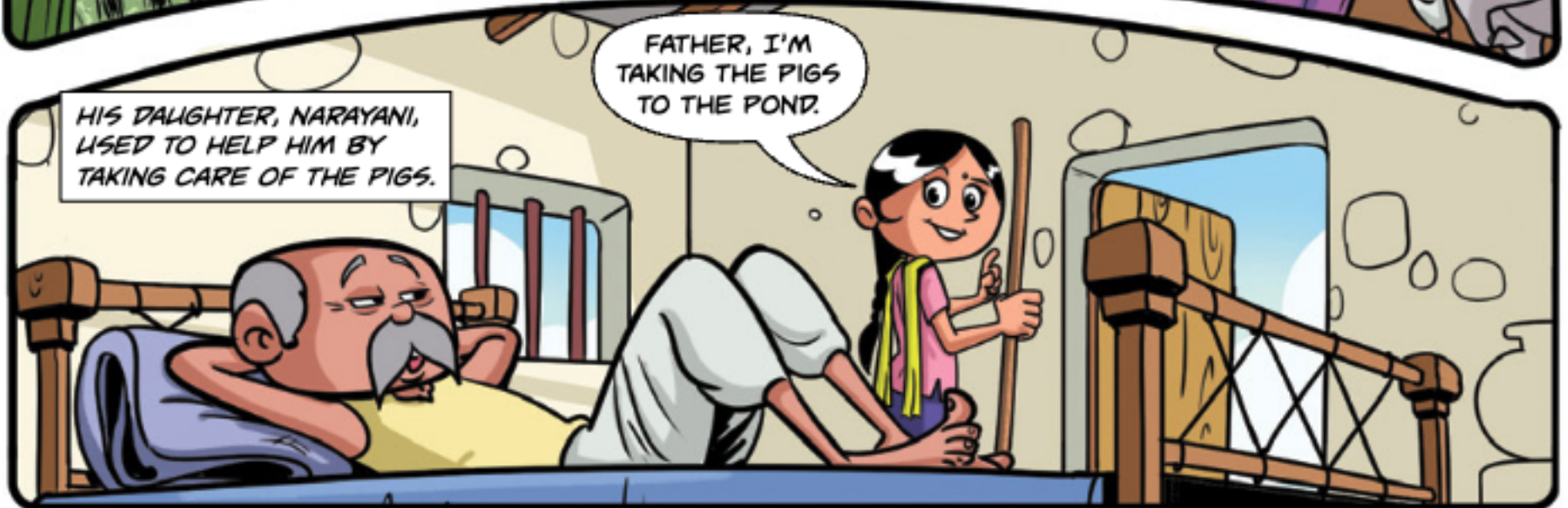


NANDU EARNED HIS LIVING BY WORKING ON A LANDLORD'S FIELD AND REARING PIGS.

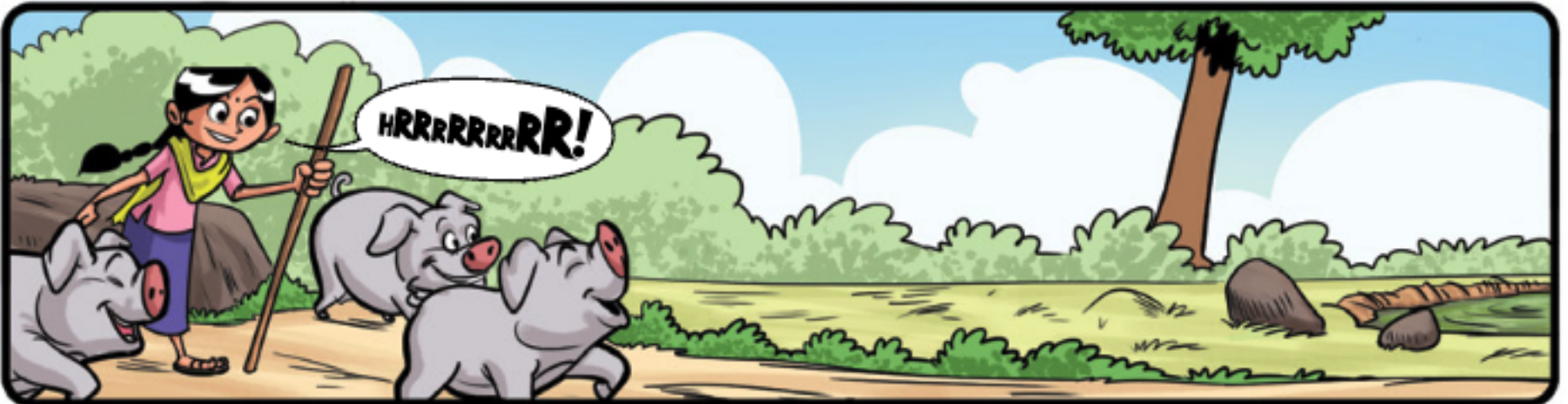


HIS DAUGHTER, NARAYANI, USED TO HELP HIM BY TAKING CARE OF THE PIGS.

FATHER, I'M TAKING THE PIGS TO THE POND.



HRRRRRRRR!



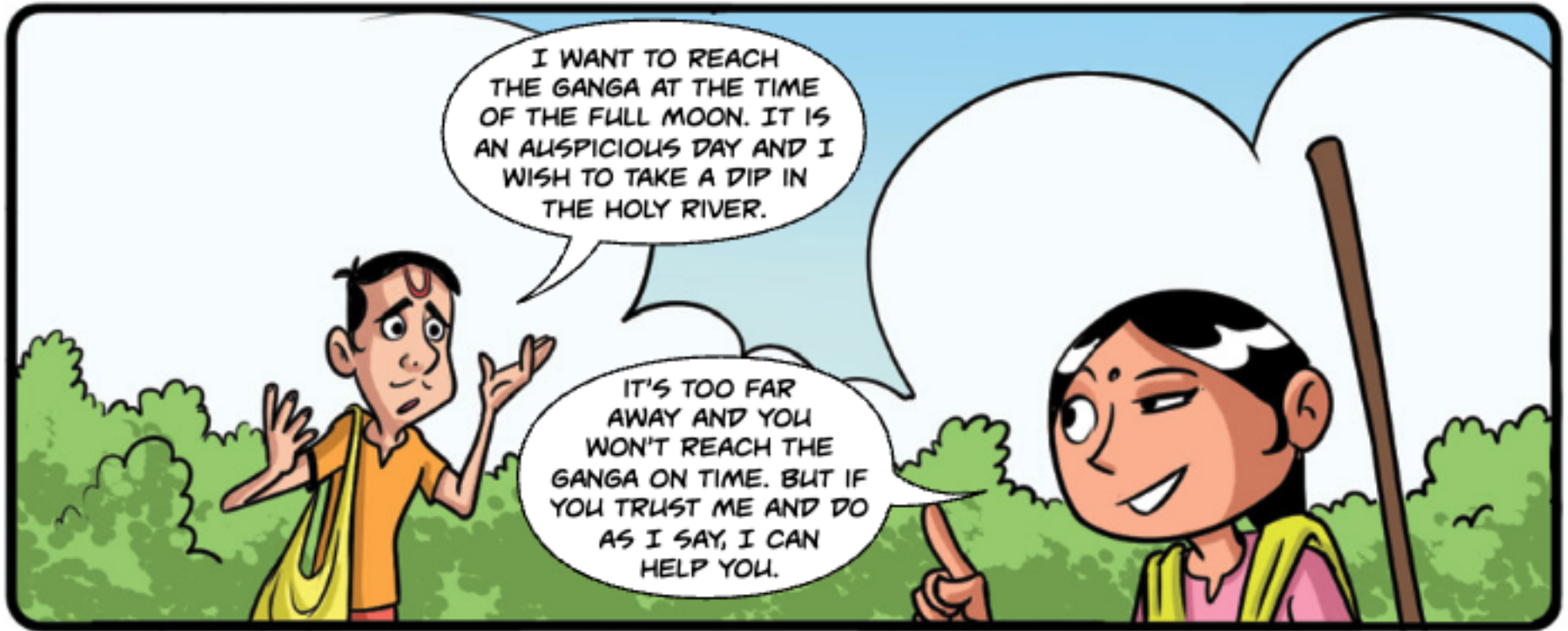
ONE DAY —

THE MAN SEEMS TO BE IN A HURRY.

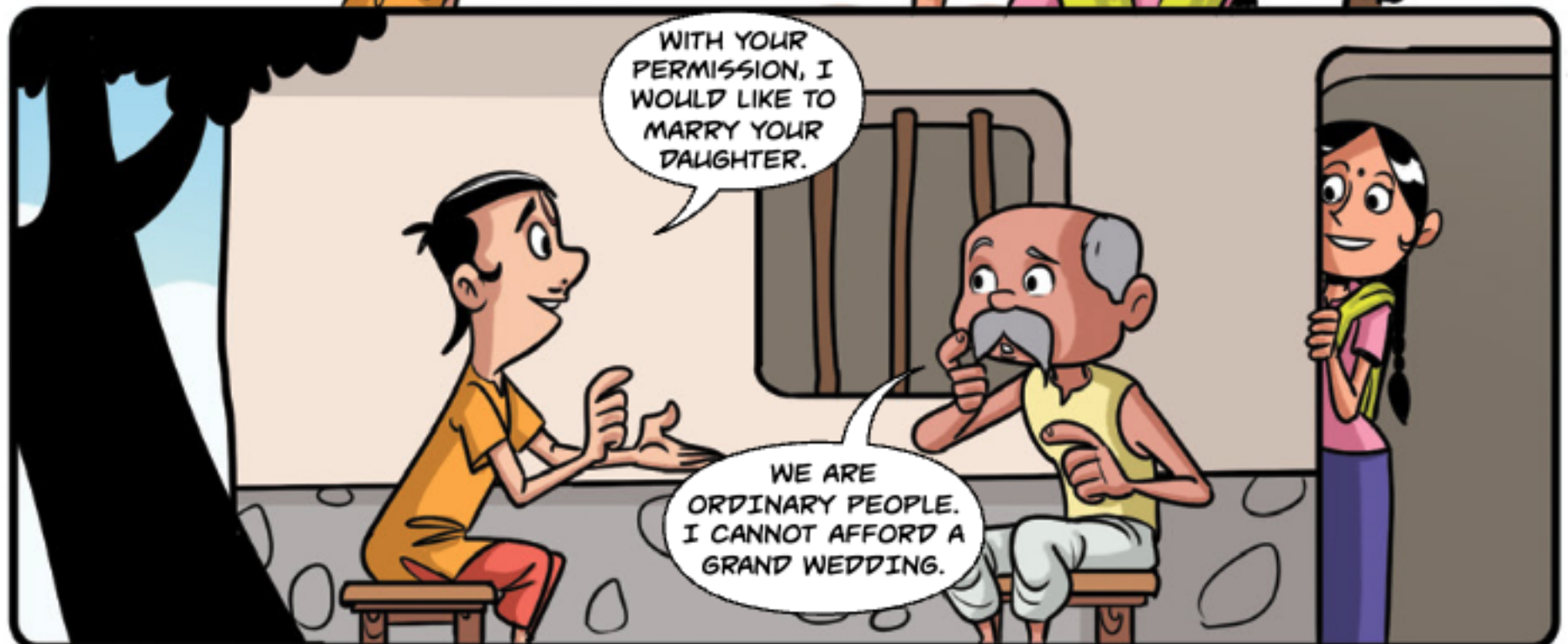
HELLO! WHERE ARE YOU GOING IN SUCH A HURRY, SIR?













THE MARRIAGE TOOK PLACE AND AS THEY WERE PREPARING TO LEAVE —

ALL THAT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME. I AM IMPRESSED BY YOUR DAUGHTER'S INTELLIGENCE AND WOULD LIKE HER TO BE MY WIFE.

WELL, HE HAS RECOGNISED THAT CORRECTLY, ALL RIGHT!

WELL THEN, YOU MAY MARRY HER IF SHE IS WILLING.

IF MY FATHER OFFERS A GIFT, YOU MUST ASK FOR SURAVI, VARAHI, AND SHAURYA.

WAIT! BEFORE YOU GO, I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU A GIFT. TELL ME, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE?

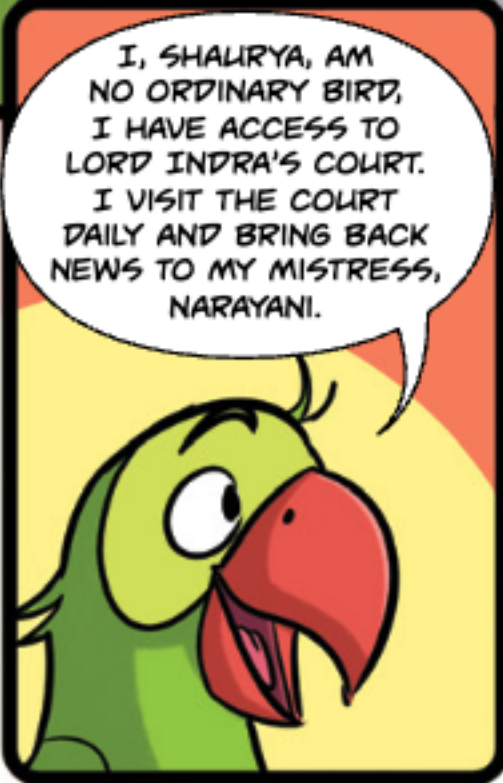
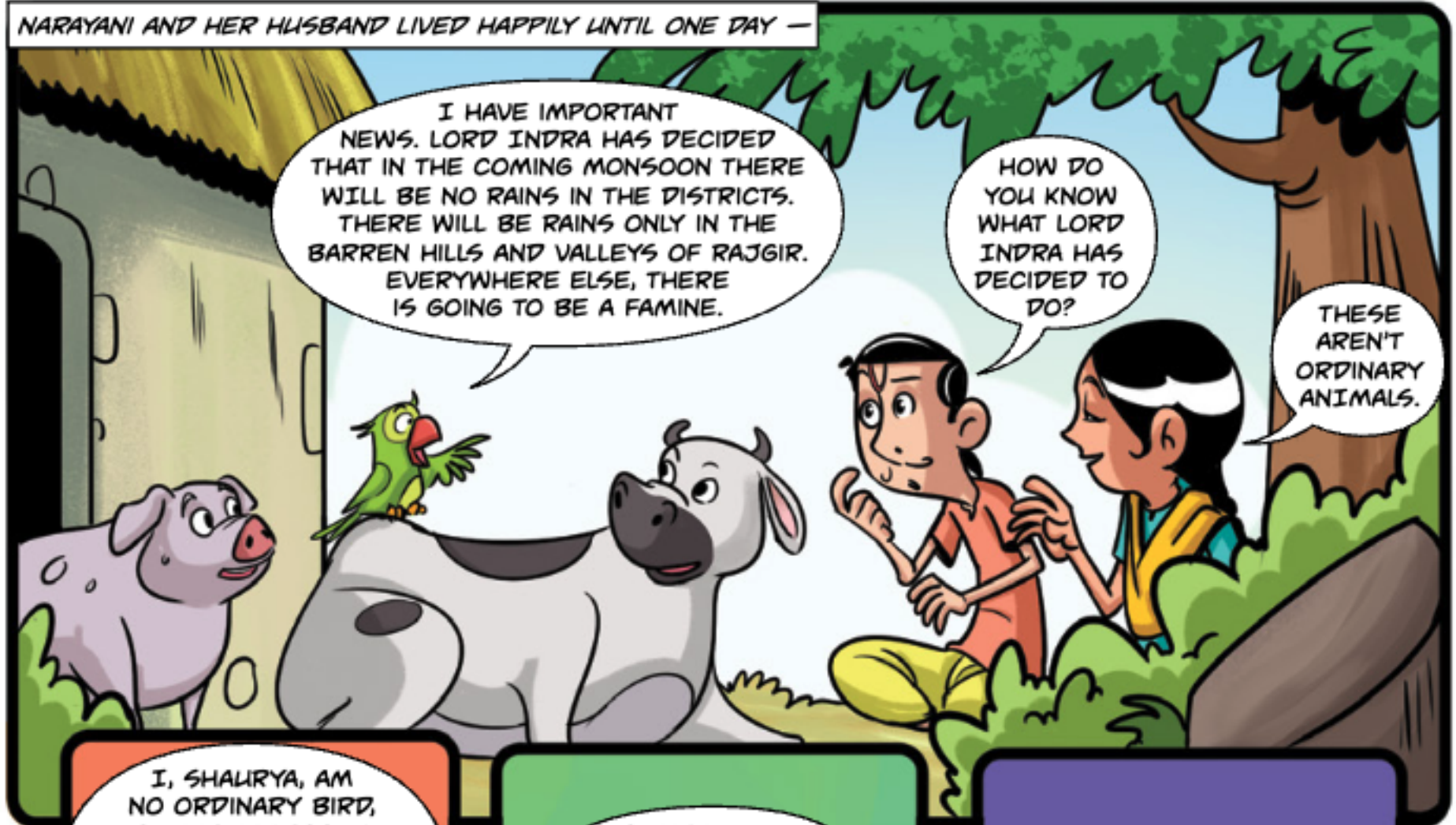
THANK YOU! WE WOULD LOVE TO TAKE SURAVI, VARAHI AND SHAURYA.

OH! OKAY, YOU CAN HAVE THEM.

THEY ARE ANIMALS!



NARAYANI AND HER HUSBAND LIVED HAPPILY UNTIL ONE DAY —

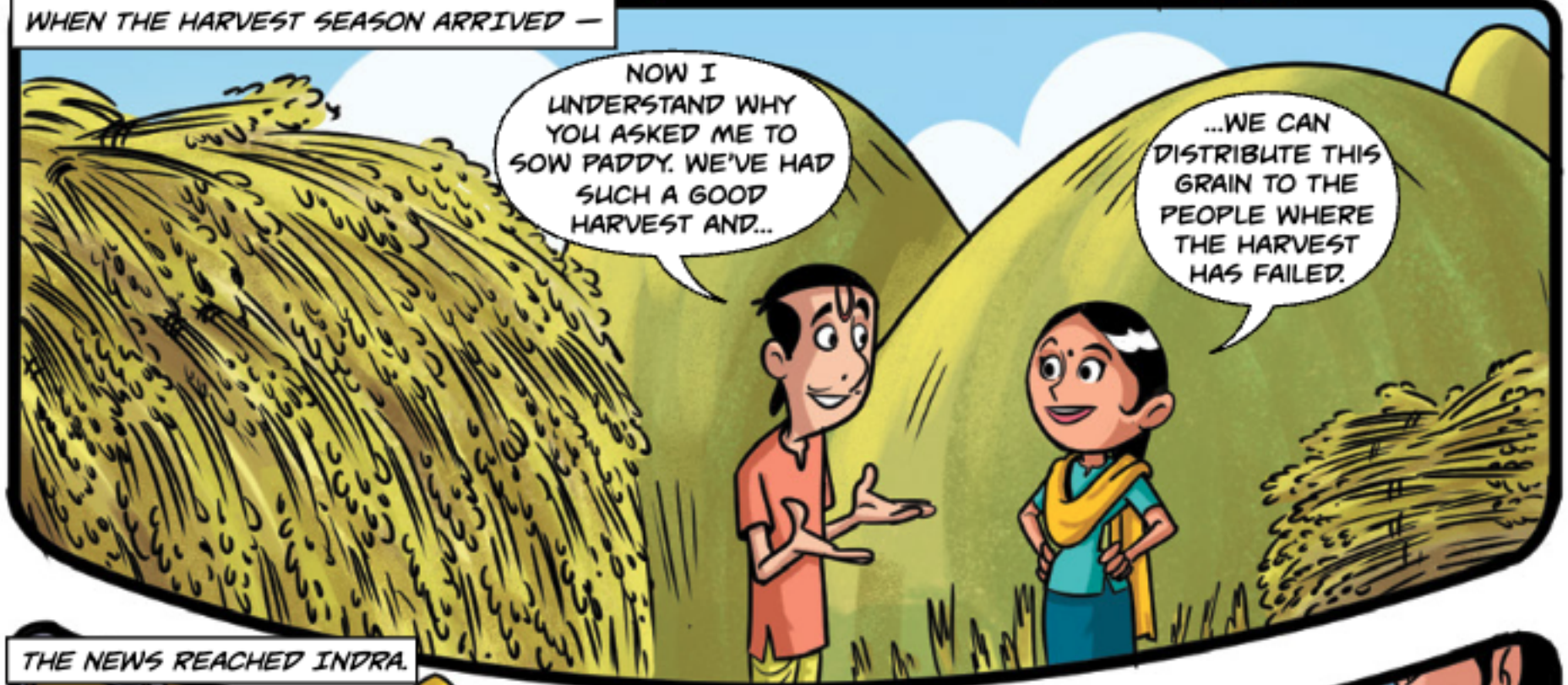




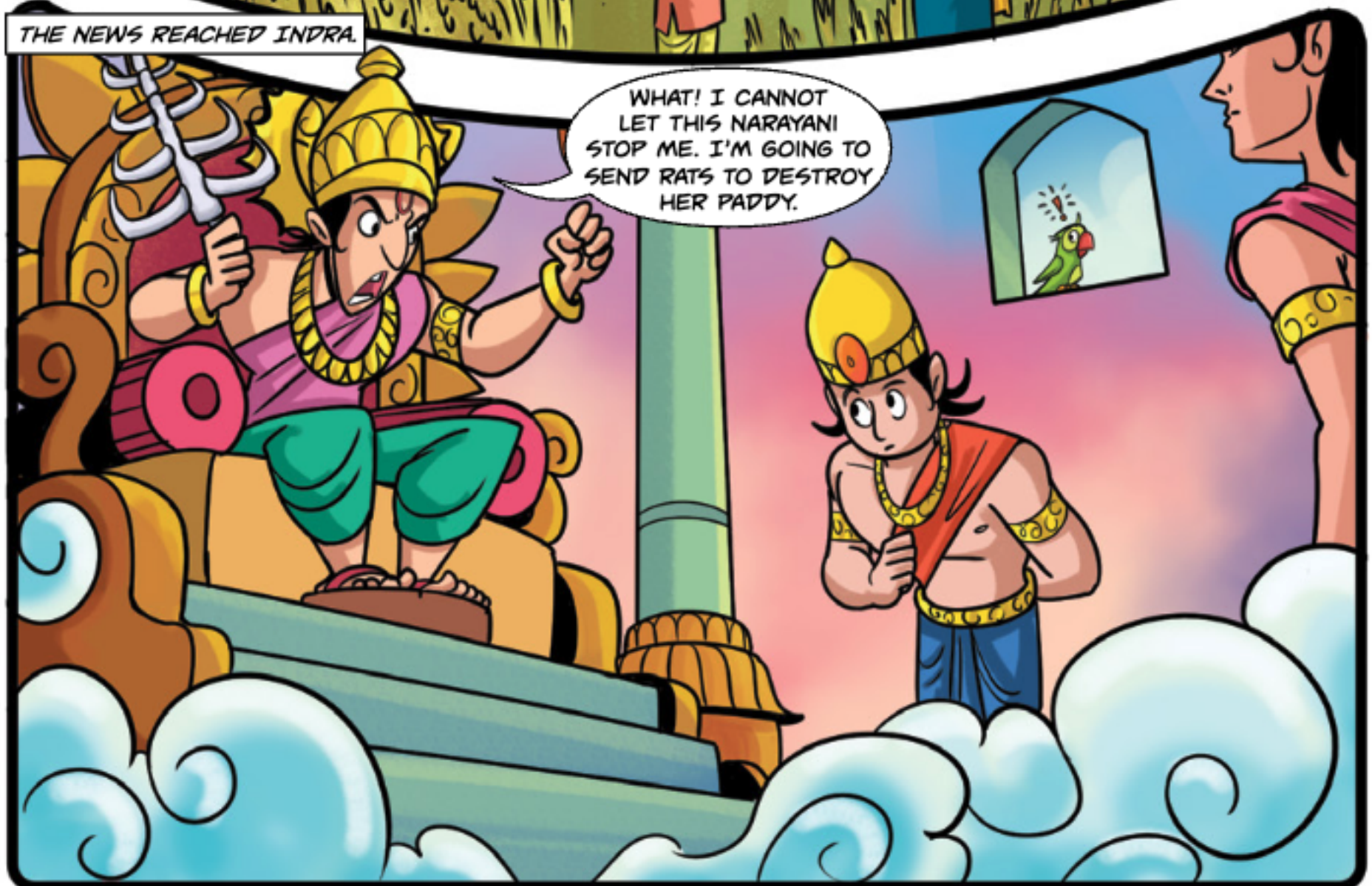
CLEVER NARAYANI



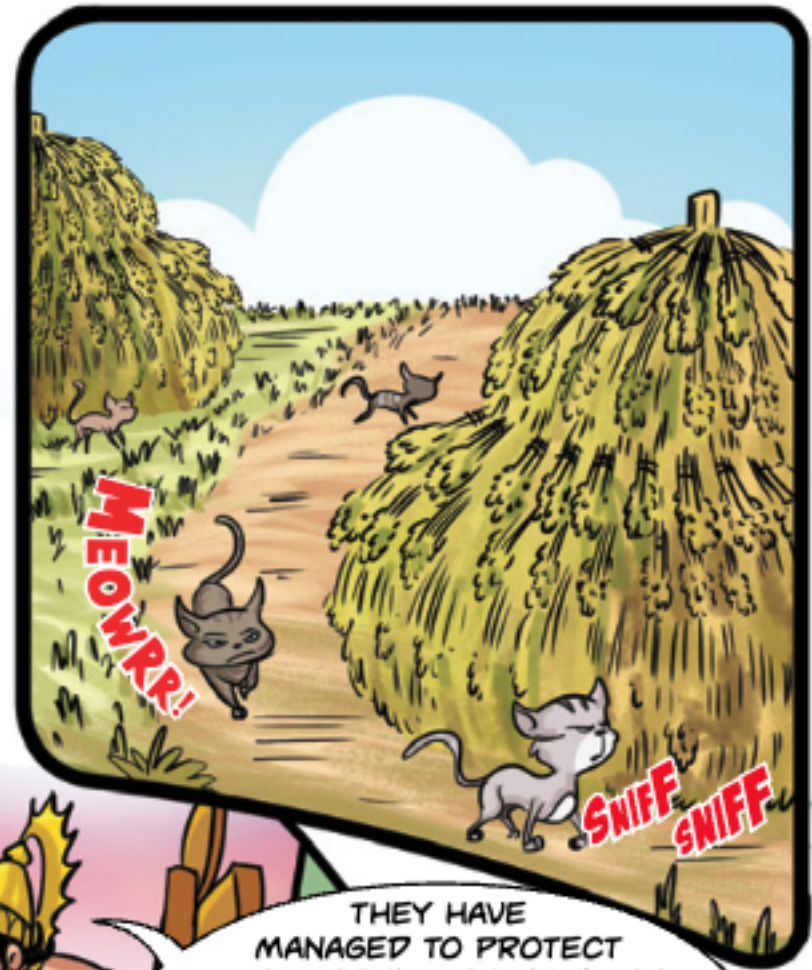
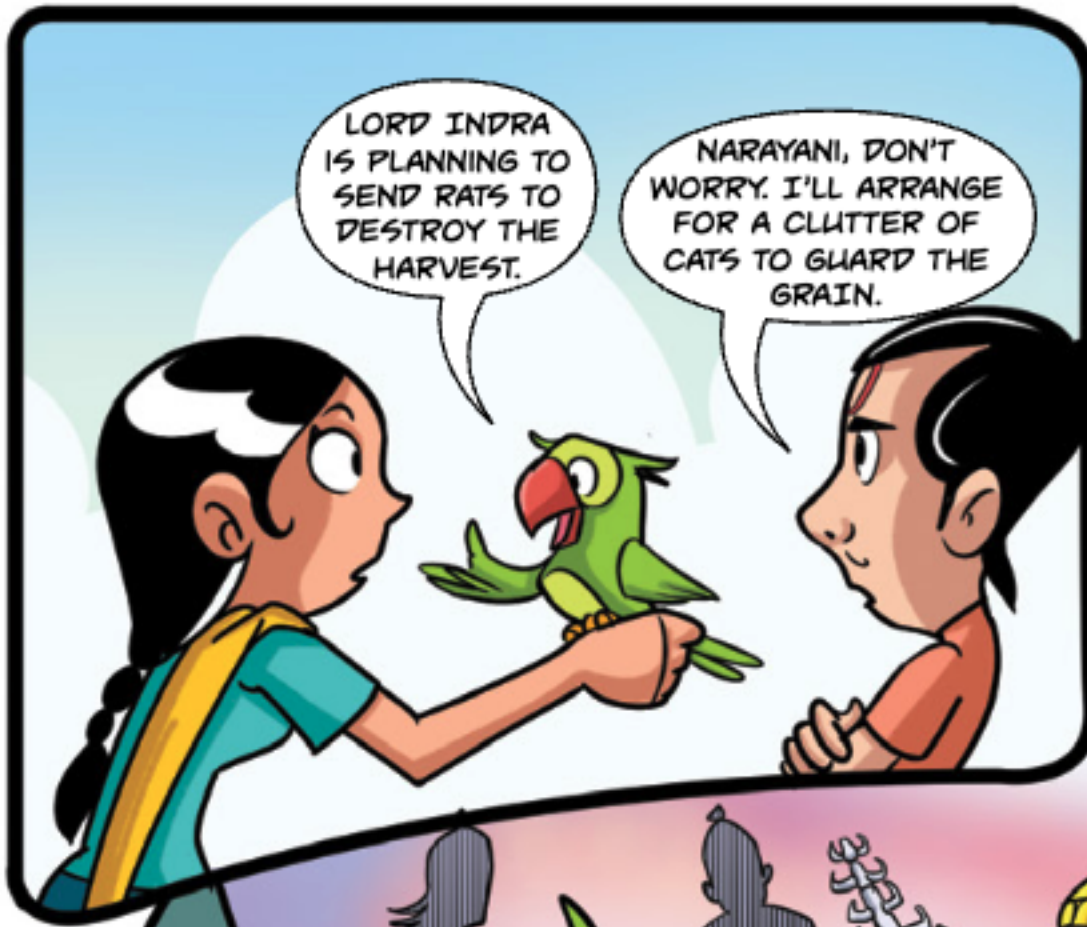
WHEN THE HARVEST SEASON ARRIVED —



THE NEWS REACHED INDRA.

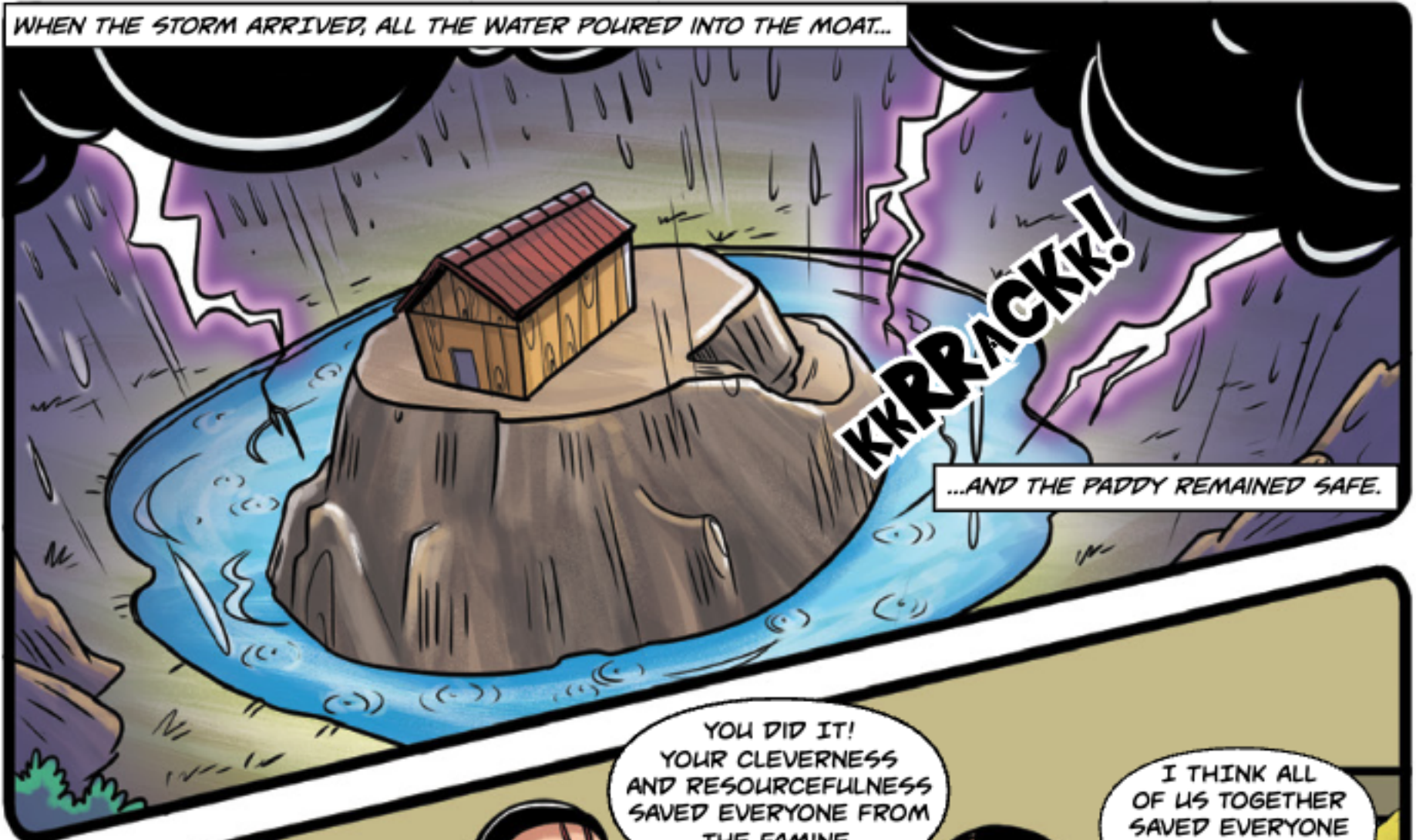




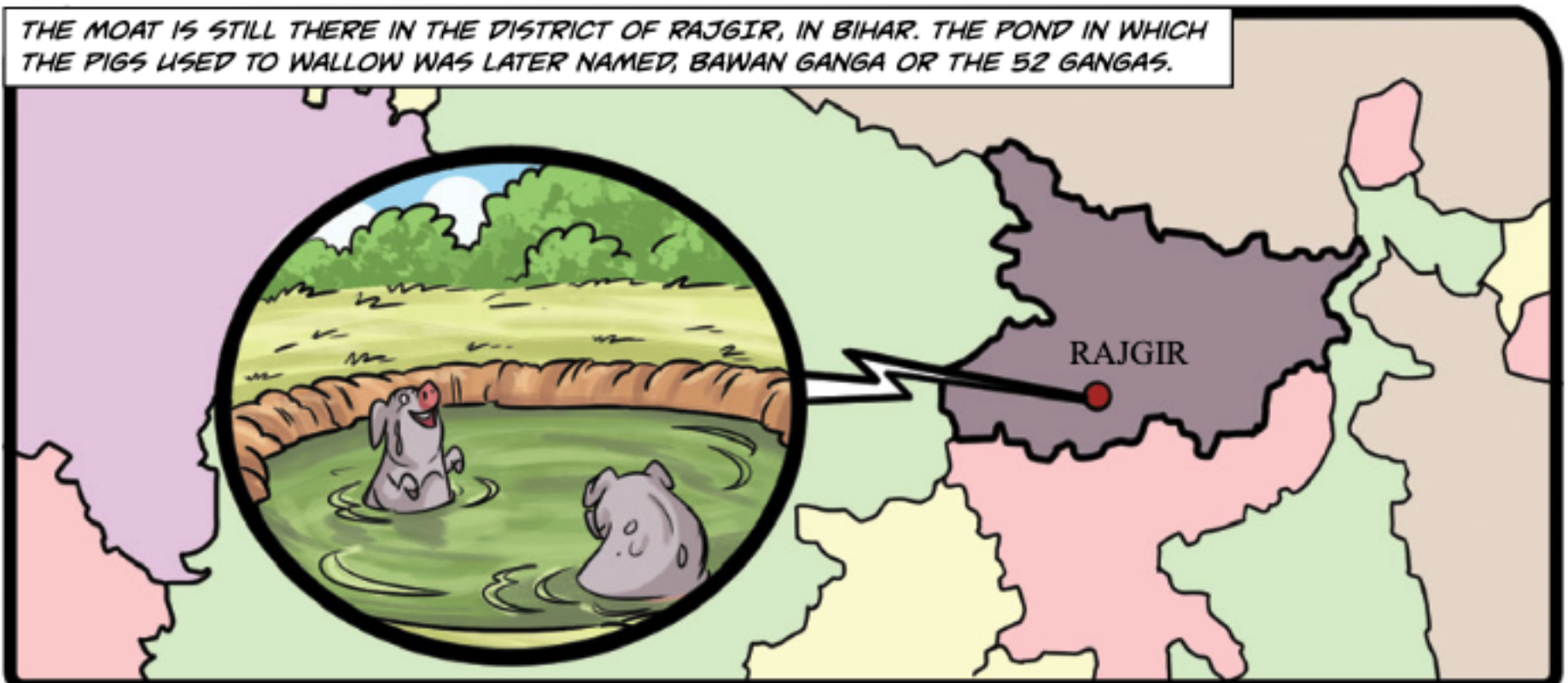




WHEN THE STORM ARRIVED, ALL THE WATER POURED INTO THE MOAT...



THE MOAT IS STILL THERE IN THE DISTRICT OF RAJGIR, IN BIHAR. THE POND IN WHICH THE PIGS USED TO WALLOW WAS LATER NAMED, BAWAN GANGA OR THE 52 GANGAS.







# THE SPIRITS OF HENASKU and Other Stories

When Jinpa's brother told him that his bull was becoming old, Jinpa set out to buy another bull. However, on his way back, the new bull refused to enter the village of Henasku. How did Jinpa find out what was stopping his bull?

Amar Chitra Katha's 'The Spirits of Henasku and Other Stories' is a collection of folktales handpicked from different parts of the country.

The collection tells the stories of a wonderful hidden town, mystical spirits, an extraordinary boy, a ghost son-in-law, a clever girl and many helpful animals. The book is filled with myths, legends and a lot of laughs.

